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ABSTRACT

To explore ways of adapting cooperative extension education to help urban poor families solve their home management and consumer problems, the Cornell-OEO project trained and then employed 38 South Brooklyn women as family assistants to work with over 500 local families. The dynamic program changed frequently during its 2 year term as its range broadened to include provision of information links between existing available services and the families (an expeditor role), shifting emphasis from wide-scope personal service to a more strictly educative function by the family assistants, and preparation of the family assistants to take on community leadership roles after the project ended in June 1971. Basic assumptions regarding the ordering of priorities and the ability of education to solve problems were found to differ widely between professional and community residents. Staff development was hampered by ambiguities of role and organization structure, ethnic mixtures, and the pressures of urban life. A major finding was that families with extensive problems were unable to utilize project help, but those with less severe problems were receptive to lasting aid. It is concluded that urban extension operations can be effectively carried out but should not be counted on as a base for faculty research or student training. (MS)

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An Exploration in Urban Extension Activity

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CORNELL OEO PROJECT:

An Exploration in Urban Extension Activity

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A PUBLIC SERVICE PROJECT UNDERTAKEN BY THE
New York State College of Human Ecology

A STATUTORY COLLEGE OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY
CORNELL UNIVERSITY, ITHACA, NEW YORK

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for the
NEW YORK STATE
OFFICE FOR
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CORNELL-OEO PROJECT:
AN EXPLORATION IN URBAN EXTENSION ACTIVITY

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The Cornell-OEO Project represents the cooperative efforts of many individuals and groups: community residents, local and state agency personnel and officials, and University faculty members.

The New York State College of Human Ecology gratefully acknowledges the counsel of Assemblywoman Constance Cook, who encouraged the undertaking of this demonstration project, and the funding support provided through the New York State Legislature.

We acknowledge the guidance and cooperation provided by Dr. Jack Sable, Dr. Nelly Hartogs, and other staff members of the Office for Community Affairs, who worked closely with Cornell University staff to develop the three-year program.

Finally, we recognize South Brooklyn Community residents' participation and their willingness to utilize the project's programs and make suggestions for improvement.

Edward H. Smith
Director, Cooperative Extension

FOREWORD

The Cornell-OEO Project, as it came to be known, provided a means for the New York State College of Human Ecology at Cornell University to apply and test its knowledge, attitudes, and skills in a highly complex urban setting. As a land-grant college, attempting to be responsive to contemporary societal concerns, it eagerly sought an opportunity to develop a cooperative program with the families in South Brooklyn. The development of an ambitious proposal to be funded by the state legislature and the subsequent carrying out of a three-year program in South Brooklyn was done with recognition of some of the complexities and risks involved. It was recognized that some faculty would oppose extending limited College resources in a new public service-extension effort; it was recognized that some officials would feel the project was duplicating educational efforts and services already available to the families in South Brooklyn; it was further recognized that risks would be encountered as program participants saw ways of improving their quality of living by initiating local social action activities. It was envisioned that a joint extension-research project would necessitate developing new staff relationships, communication systems, and administrative procedures, including fiscal management. Needless to say all of the above complexities manifested themselves. Additional concerns had to be dealt with by both site and College staff as the project evolved. It can be characterized as a dynamic problem-solving experience that has fully engaged the energies and competencies of staff to the end that it has been an invaluable learning experience.

Lucinda A. Noble
Associate Dean for Public Service
and Continuing Education

PREFACE

The Cornell-OEO Project began its community activities in mid-spring of 1969 with the recruitment of 12 women, later designated as family assistants, from the South Brooklyn community. This project represented a joint effort of the New York State College of Human Ecology at Cornell University, and the New York State Office for Community Affairs to explore ways in which the College can best utilize its educational resources to help urban poor families to solve home management and consumer problems.

In retrospect, we have trained and employed 38 family assistants and reached over 500 families with information and assistance on home improvements, food selection and preparation, health and welfare concerns, comparative shopping, money management, and many other functions. It was our intention to provide the community with new and valuable knowledge and resources in order to promote better living and unity among people.

It was soon evident that consumer and home management problems were not the most pressing problems confronting the South Brooklyn community. Lack of community involvement, drug addiction, lack of low-income housing, concern over welfare rights, and the lack of meaningful employment were magnified as high priority problems in the community. After reading this final report, we truly hope you can grasp and have insight into the concentrated input, challenges, and endless frustrations that staff members and family assistants had in trying to make the Cornell-OEO Project a viable and meaningful program in South Brooklyn and to the College. Very few programs or agencies in the South Brooklyn community have provided information, referral, and advocacy service to deal with or attack the community's designated high priority problems. There existed an urgent need to either establish a new program or expand an existing one to meet the needs of a multiracial community such as South Brooklyn.

The scope of the Cornell-OEO Project was enlarged to meet two basic needs:

1) to fill a void in services available to families;
2) to provide a linkage between available services and families.

It was not our intent to compete with other agencies but rather to acquaint families with the services available to them.

The staff of the Cornell-OEO Project realized that helping people to find and use the services they needed has become a difficult problem, not only in South Brooklyn, but also in our total complex urban society.

But time and time again throughout the life of the program, the Cornell-OEO Project proved itself as an effective vehicle in identifying, enlisting, and coordinating existing community and College resources to focus on some of these major issues.

This process was very difficult because we as a project had to respond to state needs (fiscal and program accountability), College needs (research and total program), and community needs. It was like juggling three big balls with one hand, with no prior experience as a juggler. The planning and implementation that was needed for a project of this complexity has provided a real challenge to staff and family assistants. The project has produced at one and the same time, anxiety, frustration, thoughtfulness, and exhilaration.

Albert Harris, Jr.
Project Director

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Cornell-OEO Project Proposal, developed in 1968, was a major step in a series of steps by resident faculty and Cooperative Extension personnel indicating increasing commitment to efforts at understanding and helping the urban poor of the state. These steps were taken because the faculty and administration of the New York State College of Human Ecology[1] shared the national concern of the mid-1960's with low-income groups and with the inability of professionals in all fields to serve them adequately.

ANTECEDENTS OF THE CORNELL-OEO PROJECT

Cooperative Extension had gradually increased its work with low-income urban residents in upstate New York during the early 1960's. Extension's work in New York City had started with agricultural marketing information many years earlier. A small staff had been limited to mass media efforts and occasional large group meetings. In the fall of 1966 a black home economist was employed as a specialist in consumer education with the New York City staff. Her major responsibility was to explore ways to cooperate with existing social agencies and to seek opportunities to work directly with minority groups in the metropolitan area.

Back on campus in the late fall of 1966, Harold Feldman, professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies,[2] chaired an interdepartmental ad hoc group known as the Family and Community Team (FACT) to explore program possibilities that might bring college expertise into the urban setting.

The purpose of FACT was:

> To provide a first step toward establishing an innovative program of group education in New York City. Such a program would focus the extension, research, and resident forces of the Statutory College of Home Economics[3] at Cornell on the amelioration of the many special problems of the urban disadvantaged. (7, p. 1)

The FACT Committee included resident faculty, extension staff, graduate students, and undergraduates working with a $3,000 budget granted by Dean Canoyer. The committee employed four part-time researchers, two in New York City and two in Ithaca, to determine what was being done and how program effectiveness was being measured. These researchers visited New York City agencies and colleges to learn about ongoing programs involving home economics knowledge or skills and to identify settings where research on program effectiveness had been done. FACT committee members also visited New York City action programs.

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[1] Formerly the New York State College of Home Economics, the College was renamed the New York State College of Human Ecology on July 1, 1969 by action of the New York State Legislature.

[2] With the College name change, July 1, 1969, departments also were renamed. The Department of Human Development and Family Studies was formerly, when the project began, the Department of Child Development and Family Studies.

[3] See footnote 1 above.

A review of reports on home management programs for low-income urban families was started for the FACT committee. This work was continued the following year and provided the basis for a 1969 College publication, Helping Low-Income Homemakers: Programs and Evaluations: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography, by Margaret Harding.

Extension staff members of the FACT committee were particularly concerned about ways of reaching low-income populations. In 1969 the Office of Extension Studies at Cornell published, Home Economics Work With Low-Income People, July 1, 1961 - June 30, 1967, by Marian M. Kira and Frank D. Alexander. This report summarizes work with the urban and rural poor in New York State and describes exploratory alternative teaching methods that were considered as a means of increasing effectiveness. One possibility was to use paraprofessionals to make one-to-one contact with people in their homes and another involved using the one-to-one approach as a step to getting homemakers into groups. Some of these approaches had been tried in upstate cities.

Action research proposals came to FACT from faculty members representing several departments. The assumption at this time was that one or more of these proposals would eventually be funded--perhaps by the state legislature, perhaps by some other agency.

THE 1967 - 1968 FEASIBILITY STUDY

In April, 1967 Professor Feldman prepared a final report on the varied activities of the FACT committee, and the group dissolved. Meanwhile, a general proposal for the development of a New York City program had been submitted to the 1967 legislature through the director of Cooperative Extension. This proposal had the support of Assemblywoman Constance Cook of Tompkins-Tioga Counties, and $40,000 was allocated for a feasibility study. Funding was made available through the State Office of Economic Opportunity. During the 1967-68 academic year Jack Sable, director, State OEO and Nelly Hartogs, research consultant, both of New York City, became involved in the exchange of ideas on Cornell's capacity to develop and staff a viable program. The main Cornell representatives were Nyle Brady, director of research, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the New York State College of Human Ecology,[4] and Ethel Vatter, at that time assistant coordinator of research for the College of Human Ecology. The state OEO representatives took a skeptical position, arguing that the upstate college had to prove its ability to develop an effective urban program in New York City. The Cornell representatives--rightly or wrongly--took the position that this ability had already been demonstrated and that it was only a matter of transferring existing College know-how to a new geographic setting.

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[4] Formerly the New York State College of Agriculture, the College was renamed the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences on July 1, 1971 by action of the New York State Legislature. (See also footnote 1 on p. 1.)

OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

The feasibility study group produced a proposal for a three-year action research project which was submitted to the New York State Legislature in January of 1968. The proposal recommended a one-to-one teaching strategy using a combination of home economics and social work knowledge and skills. This operation was to be staffed by many more paraprofessionals than professionals. In other projects professionals and paraprofessionals had been able to work side by side with the chronic poor who could not be reached through group education programs. The program outlined was similar to the one being conducted at the time in Rochester, New York by the local OEO-Community Action Program with aides trained by Cooperative Extension personnel but employed by the Community Action Program. A noteworthy distinction in the South Brooklyn proposal was that the same project was to provide both training and employment.

The South Brooklyn project location was chosen as an area not well supplied with poverty programs and with an ethnic composition thought to be about one-third Puerto Rican, one-third black, and one-third white. The public housing project managers and tenants' associations in Wyckoff Gardens and Gowanus Houses were reported to be receptive and aware that community facilities were not being used to capacity.

No direct or systematic contact with community residents to investigate community need or program emphasis was permitted at this time. The New York City consultant was convinced that such activity would serve to raise community hopes before funding was definite. This situation was not uncommon in poverty programs and had created distrust of the governmental and academic groups involved in writing unsuccessful proposals. This decision resulted in planning of program content without local input.

ROLE OF RESEARCH

The FACT committee had recommended that research be included in any project undertaken at this time; therefore, a modest research component was written into the project proposal. The possibility of research information being gathered differentiated the College from other potential sponsors or operators that might undertake such a teaching-service program. However, at no time was the action plan or the choice of participants based on a tightly knit research design.

When the proposal was submitted to the legislature it became clear that evaluative research was the only kind of research they would support that year.

Concerns and critical reviews of proposal elements were drawn together in a daylong conference with Marvin Sussman, professor of sociology, Case-Western University.

One concern was that FACT New York City researchers had encountered intense respondent hostility in their data gathering in East Harlem. This experience introduced the possibility that community residents might be unwilling to participate in a program with a research component. Sussman was aware of the research resistance in many cities, and his review of the proposal led him to recommend that the program begin with low-profile, small-scale activity that would permit all parties involved in the project to become acquainted with the realities of the urban situation. He suggested that an anthropological, relatively unobtrusive, observational research approach be followed at the outset and that once the project operation stabilized, it would be realistic to select for evaluation the parts of the program which seemed to be most significant to the participants. He also believed that a more significant role for the indigenous paraprofessional would be that of a network manager or advocate in order to help people use resources, rather than solely one of paraprofessional teacher. Sussman further observed that improvement of housekeeping practices would probably not seem like a high priority objective to hard pressed residents of the inner city.

SCOPE OF THE FUNDED PROPOSAL

The legislature appropriated funds to the New York State OEO in the spring of 1968 with a portion designated for the Cornell-South Brooklyn project to support the first year of a three-year project. Overall responsibility for project administration was assigned to Edward H. Smith, director, Cooperative Extension, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the New York State College of Human Ecology.[5] Within the College of Human Ecology, responsibility for planning and implementation moved from the research administration office to that of Lucinda Noble, associate dean for public service and continuing education. A new planning group chaired by Miss Noble made a number of revisions in the project proposal.

The recast proposal included expansion of service to encompass all community residents, rather than chronic poor housekeepers, and the service focus changed from housekeeping practices to consumer education and home management, broadly conceived. It was assumed that these were matters of high priority and local relevance in light of the then current concerns in the public press and government circles about the poor paying more and the level of consumer fraud in low-income areas. Flexibility of program content was builtin, and it was understood that the content would be changed in response to community needs as they became known in the course of the project. Post-project job preparation was no longer an integral part of the proposal. The evaluative research component's assignment was to help the Brooklyn project administrator in a staff capacity, as well as to monitor the day-to-day project processes and long range outcomes.

The revised project proposal was approved by the Office of Economic Opportunity in late November, 1968 and the contract was formally signed

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[5] See footnote 1 on p. 1 and footnote 4 on p. 2.

December 30, 1968. This date, approximately six months after the beginning of the fiscal year, was to be significant in shaping the project during its first year of operation. Expenditures were honored back to November 1, but no major commitments could be made until the official signing.

The general tone of the final proposal entitled, A Cooperative Program in Home Management and Consumer Education in a Low-Income Area in New York City, is expressed in the introductory paragraphs.

> This demonstration and research project is proposed as a means to explore ways in which low-income families and the New York State College of Home Economics[6] might benefit from participating in a cooperative program.
>
> The New York State College of Home Economics has skilled teaching and research personnel who are concerned with human development and the quality of the human environment. Food buying, nutrition, care and selection of clothing, housing, housekeeping practices, money management, family relationships, are areas in which the College can actively contribute relevant information and assistance to urban low-income families. The leaders and families cooperating in the project can bring to the attention of the College information about the depth and complexities of the programs related to those areas.
>
> It is hoped that the cooperative program will stimulate, through interaction, development of individual skills, and collective experiences that result in changed attitudes and behavior patterns.

This section has described the historical context out of which the South Brooklyn project arose. There has been an effort to convey the complex of ideas and pragmatic constraints confronting those who produced the working proposal. Finally, the attempt has been made to indicate the general thrust of the program whose shifting course is to be described in the pages that follow.

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[6] See footnote 1 on p. 1.

II. AN OVERVIEW OF THE CORNELL-OEO PROJECT

The Cornell-OEO Project in South Brooklyn, New York was an attempt to develop and adapt the traditional methods of Cooperative Extension to serve better the needs of the urban poor. It was a demonstration project, undertaken jointly by the New York State College of Human Ecology[1] at Cornell University and the New York State Office of Community Affairs,[2] with a commitment to training, service, and evaluative research. It was funded by the New York State Legislature for a two and one-half year period, from November, 1968 through June, 1971.

The major goal of the project was to improve the competence of low-income homemakers in the areas of purchasing, budgeting, and home management. Additional goals were to improve the feelings of self-worth of these homemakers and other members of their families, to improve their ability to make use of various community services, and to mobilize some community activity to increase the range of services available. During the project, 38 women from the community were trained to be teaching homemakers and employed by the project as soon as their training was completed. The title they chose for themselves was "family assistant," and the range of their activities was considerably broader than that of teaching homemakers. In the later stages of the project a major goal became enhancement of the ability of the family assistants to take leadership roles in the community after the project was over. To this end they were given a final round of training in various human relations and leadership skills during the last six months of the project.

PHYSICAL SETTING AND PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

The specific area served by the project includes roughly 60,000 people in and around two New York City public housing projects, Gowanus Houses and Wyckoff Gardens. The neighborhood is ethnically mixed, not in neatly balanced thirds as originally believed, but with about two-fifths of the families black, two-fifths Puerto Rican (or Spanish-speaking), and the remainder from other ethnic groups. An apartment was rented in Wyckoff Gardens for use as a teaching and service facility, and also to provide office space for some staff members.

The first five months of the project were devoted mainly to working out administrative and facility arrangements and to recruiting key staff. The project director, Albert J. Harris, Jr., had been a program director at Colony House, the major community center in the project area. The training director, Miss Suzanne Matsen, had been an assistant professor in consumer education at the College. She moved to New York City in the late fall to initiate preparations for the project. The research director, Edward Ostrander, an associate professor at the College, remained in Ithaca where most members of the research staff were located. Other key staff included a research associate in Brooklyn and several group workers who supervised the activities of the family assistants.

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[1] See footnote 1 on p. 1.

[2] OEO and other agencies were merged under the New York State Office for Community Affairs established by an executive order, August 29, 1969.

TRAINING AND SERVICE

The first group of 12 trainees was recruited in March, 1969. In a little over a year four groups or waves, each composed of eight to 12 women, were trained. Each wave participated in a half-day, eight-week course covering 168 hours of field and classroom training. The training content they covered included food and nutrition, child development, interior decoration, money management, family health, consumer protection, the family life cycle, and skills in working with families. The curriculum content and manner of presentation evolved from one wave to the next. Revisions were based on the suggestions of the trainees, initiative of the instructors, and availability of appropriate outside personnel.

Women who were graduated from the course were given the title, "family assistant." After graduation, family assistants visited community homes to work with families on a one-to-one basis. In the service phase, the family assistants' workweek was officially 20 hours. Twelve hours were to be spent working with families and the remaining eight hours devoted to in-service training. At first family assistants recruited their families by going door-to-door and explaining the project services. Once contact was made with families the urgency of some problems often resulted in involvement far exceeding the 12 hour workweek. It became evident from the outset that many of the problems encountered by the family assistants were not narrowly related to home management and consumer education but encompassed the gamut of human problems including interpersonal relations, health, alcoholism, drugs, housing, and school and welfare issues.

Family assistants quickly found they could help alleviate many of these problems by telling the family which existing community agencies or resources might provide assistance. This expeditor role was a common one for family assistants to play early in the project history. In other cases the family assistant actually took people to an agency and sometimes assumed an advocacy role for the family in dealing with the agency.

In-service training activities for family assistants were extremely varied. Formal teaching, demonstrations, discussions, sensitivity training, and field trips were used to increase knowledge and develop skills in interpersonal relations. Some speakers were invited from New York City social service agencies and other content specialists came from Cornell. Occasionally the in-service training involved a continuing program, such as a workshop in sewing or furniture refinishing. Other in-service activity included Red Cross home health training that had implications for future employment.

The individual contact or one-to-one approach to families was retained throughout the project. Families continued to request service or continued to be contacted primarily through word-of-mouth communication. As the project matured additional activities were undertaken. Family assistants and staff organized into special interest committees on education, housing, and child care to participate actively with already functioning groups in the community to try to improve community resources and delivery of service. Family assistant members of this committee attended community meetings and reported back to the project staff.

Workshops also were held for the community residents in facilities provided by the project. Family assistants and staff taught sewing, furniture refinishing, and interior decorating to groups of community residents. The workshops for community groups extended the outreach of the project to new people who had not been contacted previously by family assistants. Project staff, including family assistants, participated in classroom panel discussions on the Cornell campus several times during the course of the project.

EVALUATIVE RESEARCH

The research component of the project had three major objectives: (1) to collect and interpret data useful to the project administration in revising training plans and priorities for service activities; (2) to maintain systematic records of project activities that could be used in later analysis of the project as a social enterprise--more specifically, as a venture in university-community cooperation; and (3) to assess the impact of the project on its Brooklyn staff, the families they served, and on the surrounding community.

The major obstacle to these goals was the intense distrust of all types of research activity by most of the paraprofessional members of the Brooklyn staff. Many family assistants freely voiced the suspicion that the Ithaca-based research staff had ulterior motives and would exploit them and the families with whom they worked. They expressed resentment over the long history of research reports that have highlighted derogatory information about minority groups. Such inquiries and reports are seen both as invasion of privacy and as exploitation of people in unfortunate circumstances. In the experience of the family assistants, research studies seldom if ever lead to any observable benefit to the subjects of research.

Two major approaches were used by the research staff in attempting to deal with this distrust. The first was an agreement that there would be no systematic attempt to collect research data outside project goals. Project research data would come through reports made by family assistants and records of Brooklyn training sessions and staff conferences. Any exception to this rule would be with the approval of the staff and participants. An early exception was made with the agreement of participants to enable a graduate student member of the research staff to collect data for her thesis.

The second major approach was a series of visits to Brooklyn by members of the Ithaca research staff, and a series of conferences and guided interviews in both Brooklyn and Ithaca with key members of the Brooklyn staff.

These approaches were successful in making possible the regular collection of research data throughout the life of the project; however, they represented a compromise that was not very satisfactory to any of the parties concerned. In particular, getting usable reports from the family assistants proved to be far more difficult than the research staff had expected. Nevertheless, the family assistants eventually made reports on most of their dealings with families, and the research staff developed a reasonably objective system for recording major problems faced by families and the major types of service given to them.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Probably the most important lesson learned was that the project actually could be carried out, including all three components of training, service, and evaluative research. The project has provided important evidence that it is indeed possible to adapt the traditional methods of Cooperative Extension to serve the needs of the urban poor. The project has also indicated that the major modification required is the employment of paid paraprofessionals to work with individuals and families on a one-to-one basis. Though this adds tremendously to the cost of extension work, it seems to be essential for comprehensive, family-oriented programs in poverty areas.

The research efforts of the project have shown once again the tremendous gulf that lies between the goals and assumptions of middle class academic people--including both those professionally trained in Cooperative Extension and those professionally trained in research--and the goals and assumptions of the urban poor and their developing community leaders. More importantly, perhaps, the project has shown that under favorable circumstances it is possible to reach a fair degree of mutual understanding, and to develop arrangements that make possible cooperative efforts toward the goals of each group. These arrangements are difficult to work out, and they require considerable modification of the initial assumptions of all groups concerned.

These "lessons" learned from the whole project experience seem more firmly established than any specific "research findings." The most important research finding is probably the discovery that families with a considerable number of pressing problems are unable to utilize help in the areas of home management and consumer education, even when this help is offered on a one-to-one basis. These families often did benefit from direct personal help by the family assistants. The commonest kinds of personal help were: taking a family member to a medical clinic or social agency, serving as an interpreter to non-Spanish-speaking agency personnel, interceding for a family with welfare or educational authorities.

The impact of the Cornell-OEO Project proved very difficult to assess. It was most dramatic--although probably not lasting--on those individuals for whom family assistants provided direct personal help with some immediate pressing problem. It is likely that in many families there were more lasting results from the educational efforts of the family assistants--mainly in the areas of better purchasing practices and greater ability to make use of existing community services. It is difficult to document these results in the absence of a follow-up study.

The staff believes that the project has had a major impact on the self-image and social competence of the majority of family assistants employed in it, though this would be very difficult to support objectively. There is no doubt, however, that a number of family assistants have gone on to jobs involving more responsibility than any they had held before participating in the Cornell-OEO Project, and that others are playing more active roles in community affairs than they did previously. The enduring impact on the general South Brooklyn community can only be assessed in the years to come.

III. THE PROJECT IN OPERATION

The project formally began on November 1, 1968 when Miss Suzanne Matsen, who had been assistant professor of consumer education, was assigned temporary leadership. After establishing an operating center in the Office of Consumer Education maintained by the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at 11 Park Place in Manhattan, Miss Matsen devoted her energies to enlisting the support and cooperation of the New York City agencies most likely to work with the project. After the contract was officially signed on December 31, 1968, full scale efforts to select a project staff, to find suitable working space, and to establish an identity in the South Brooklyn community could be undertaken with assurance that commitments would be honored.

Several major decisions were made in rapid succession. The choice of staff, particularly, shaped the character of the new organization, as each person created his new role.

STAFF SELECTION

The first major decision was the selection of Albert Harris, Jr. as project director. He had been affiliated with the Colony-South Brooklyn Neighborhood Houses as program director. Previously he had worked with the Job Corps for several years, first as an instructor and recreation specialist, later as a supervisor, center director, and finally as a recreation director. Still earlier, he had been a public school teacher and recreation leader. In addition to his professional training and experience he brought to the project a good knowledge of the physical and social resources of the area, a wide acquaintance with community residents and leaders, and a great enthusiasm for building a stronger network of community organizations. His commitment to maintaining good personal relationships and holding together the factions which had in the past threatened the existence of other local groups was also crucial. His interest in community organization later enabled him to assume leadership in forming an interagency council in the project area and made him alert to the need for concerted effort at the community level as well as for the stated program objectives at the individual level. Much of his time and energy throughout the project, in addition to maintaining the organization, was devoted to work at the second or community level. He saw that response to recognized community-wide problems was essential to demonstrate the project's concern for the people in the neighborhood.

Miss Matsen became the assistant director for training and service. She was the only white professional and the only College faculty member on the site throughout the project. Although she had had no previous experience in working with low-income or minority group people and felt this to be a distinct handicap, she quickly identified with community problems and aspirations and became an advocate of consumer action as well as education.

Other key appointees in the first few weeks were three group workers, who were to be the immediate supervisors of the paraprofessionals. All three had worked in other organizations intended to benefit low-income, minority group members and all had worked in New York City agencies. Two had college degrees and graduate training, one in fine arts and one in education. The third group worker had both college and secretarial training. One, who later became the research associate, was from Panama and her Spanish-English bilingual skills proved invaluable.

The director's secretary was also chosen partly on the basis of identity with Puerto Rican organizations and competence in Spanish. She later became a group worker. One of the first three group workers left almost immediately for a position in another state, and had little impact on the total development of the project. Each of the others, however, contributed significantly to the character of the project as it went into action.

For a variety of reasons the group worker turnover was the highest of any position in the project. There was a total of seven different people who were group workers for at least a brief period of time. The part each one played was unique as each new group worker defined his or her role in a different fashion.

Another group worker was hired before the training of the third wave began. She was a recent college graduate with a background in human development and family studies and had also had secretarial experience. The last two group workers hired were male. One, who had had training for group leadership and supervision, joined the staff before the beginning of Wave IV training. The other, with Spanish language skills, came on after training was completed as a replacement for the Spanish-speaking group worker who had returned to Puerto Rico. He had worked with young people at Colony-South Brooklyn Neighborhood Houses. Both of the males had had some college training.

CHOICE OF SPACE

A second major decision was the choice of space where the project would establish its identity in the neighborhood. The teaching apartment in Wyckoff Gardens is described in the section on space in Chapter IX. It had both advantages and disadvantages, but the choice had to be made early and the project staff considered themselves fortunate to be able to rent an apartment in the housing project. The decision was dictated partly by security needs because a storefront would have required installation of security devices or other added expense. In addition, the choice between Wyckoff and Gowanus was made on the basis of the higher status attributed to Wyckoff at that time as a newer housing project, still occupied mostly by the original tenants. The local leaders who were consulted thought women from Gowanus would not hesitate to go to Wyckoff for classes, but that Wyckoff residents might be reluctant about going to Gowanus.

The project director and, to a lesser degree, the assistant director for training continued to use the 11 Park Place office as an administrative center until July, 1970 when space was secured at 85 Hoyt Street, a few blocks from the teaching apartment.

ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY

Miss Matsen's major task during the first few weeks in addition to her participation in selection of staff and space, was completion of plans for the first training course. The entire staff addressed itself to establishing the credibility of the project. This meant enlisting the interest and active support of community leaders in the organized service agencies and in special interest groups like the tenants' associations and the parents' groups. The director and assistant director made many individual contacts, culminating in a group meeting late in February attended by representatives from local agencies and organizations. This meeting was regarded as an early turning point because the staff members left the meeting with the endorsement of the program by the group. Some of those who attended the meeting representing either parents' or tenants' groups were later employed as family assistants in the project. General endorsement by many organizations thus took the place of the formal sponsorship by one local group pictured earlier in the planning stage.

The functions of the group attending the February meeting were to advise on the recruitment of trainees, to recommend applicants for training, to suggest the best times for training and in general to review the purposes and objectives of the program. While there may have been ambiguity and misunderstanding at the time, the general tone of the meeting suggested enthusiasm. In explaining what might otherwise have been considered rather inconsistent criticism of the program goals, officers in one tenants' association later said that they made a policy of encouraging new projects to come to the area because they meant jobs and services.

RECRUITING THE FIRST TRAINEES

As a result of this meeting, community organizations were invited to recommend candidates, and application forms and recommendation blanks were distributed to the Wyckoff Tenants' Association, the Gowanus Tenants' Association, the South Brooklyn Community Anti-Poverty Agency, and Colony-South Brooklyn Houses, Incorporated. Forty-four applications were distributed, 30 recommendations and applications were returned, and 25 applicants were interviewed by the key staff working in two-man teams on March 12, 1969. Twelve candidates were accepted. A get-acquainted tea was held in the teaching apartment on March 20, attended by representatives from the State Office of Economic Opportunity and local community agencies and organizations, as well as the 12 family assistants who were guests of honor. Training began March 24. At the time it seemed vital to become a visibly functioning organization as quickly as possible.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

In retrospect both the director and assistant director felt that more time should have been allocated for the key staff to work together prior to the first training session. This would have enabled them to clarify their own roles and learn what to expect of each other. It would also have provided an opportunity for working out operating details for carrying out project objectives.

The three major project objectives stated in the proposal were:

1) to train and employ women in a low-income area in order to increase their interest and personal competence in home management and consumer buying skills;

2) to assist low-income homemakers adapt to more successful home management and consumer buying practices;

3) to provide guidelines for future decisions of policy makers and administrators

    a) by answering some of the pressing questions about selection and effective involvement of indigenous low-income workers in human resources projects, and

    b) by answering some of the questions about effective combinations of professional and indigenous staff in urban Cooperative Extension work.

In the following chapters these major objectives are discussed showing the steps taken to fulfill each one, some of the problems and outcomes, and where possible, recommendations that emerged for future project planning. The major responsibility of the evaluative research staff was to record and analyze project activity in order to provide the basis for short and long term planning.

Each aspect of the project had its own characteristic problems; however, four elements, which to some extent were unavoidable, affected the work in all areas. These four factors were: space, language, ambiguity in role definitions, and the temporary status of the project. In the chapter on project organization and administration they are discussed in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of the actual compromises made.

The location of the project site in relation to New York City and the larger South Brooklyn area is shown in Map 1. (All maps are in the appendix.) From the perspective of the project staff, the renovation of old buildings for the use of middle and upper income families aggravated the already acute shortage of livable housing that is referred to throughout this report. Map 2, based on a survey conducted by project personnel, shows the location of houses in the project area renovated before January, 1971. Map 3 shows the family assistants' residences and Map 4 the residences of families served.

IV. FAMILY ASSISTANTS: THE PARAPROFESSIONAL STAFF

This project was built on the belief that homemakers living in a low-income area could be trained in subject-matter content and teaching techniques that would enable them to assist other families in their neighborhood adopt more successful home management and consumer buying practices. The women to be employed were thought of primarily as teaching homemakers but were also to be well informed about community resources. With this knowledge they could refer people to the appropriate service agencies able to help them solve their problems or at least alleviate them.

Recruitment and Selection

What prior experience, knowledge, and skills would be most valuable in performing this type of work in this community setting was not explicitly known. It was one of the questions the project was created to answer.

SOURCE OF REFERRAL

The local leaders who were consulted during the first phase of the project were asked to suggest criteria for selection of aides and to suggest candidates.

> Selection of Teaching Homemakers will be a primary responsibility of the cooperating community agency working with the project staff. (26, p. 7)

Those organizations represented at the February 24 meeting that gave general endorsement to the project, also recommended women for training.

In an interview concerning the early period in the project, Director Harris commented on the earlier discussions.

> We raised the question: How about recruiting? It was decided to give applications to the Tenants' Association in Gowanus, Tenants' Association in Wyckoff, Colony-South Brooklyn, the local CPC and others.

Of the 38 candidates eventually accepted for training, nine were referred by the two tenants' associations, 13 by area social organizations and agencies, 11 through word of mouth, and five were homemakers who had been visited by other family assistants.

There were always more candidates than positions available. Some excellent prospects had to be held over to a later class when the openings to meet current requirements were already filled. The backlog of good applicants and the need to satisfy certain criteria reduced the volume of recruiting and interviewing for classes following the first one.

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS

Out of the initial discussions with community people came these broad qualifications for candidates described by the project director: resident of the area, really concerned about the community, dedicated, having leadership ability, and able to get along with people. These qualifications were very general.

The project director pointed out that the generality of these qualifications was not unique to this project. He described the selection criteria usually operative in poverty programs in these words:

> When you're hiring, and I quote, "low-income people" in community jobs, there are not many qualifications in the job description. One of the qualifications in such a job description is usually: Are you responsible, are you willing to take the job, are you willing to come in on time, or things that we take for granted. Those are actually the qualifications for getting that job. Grades and experience are not a big thing. Can you work with people, are you responsible, can you come in on time? . . . If you can adhere to these qualifications, you've got the job. And that's what they look for until you get into a problem area where you have to deal or relate or something.

The application forms were accompanied by project description sheets with information on pay, benefits, requirements for employment, and deadlines for submission of applications. The written material carried the following employment requirements:

> Residence: Homemaker must live in the Wyckoff Gardens Housing Project, the Gowanus Housing Project, or in the community area surrounding both housing projects.
>
> Age: She must be 18 years of age or older.
>
> Availability: She must be able to attend eight consecutive weeks of half-day training classes which will meet daily from Monday through Friday.
>
> Literacy: She must be able to read and understand simple directions. (Language not specified. Application blanks were printed in both English and Spanish.)
>
> Time flexibility: She must make firm arrangements for care of children during working hours recognizing the necessity of flexibility of work hours.

BENEFITS PROVIDED

The recruiting information also explained that the program was expected to run for approximately two and a half years, until June 30, 1971, and that trainees would be eligible for the following benefits:

> Training period pay: $2.25 per hour for eight weeks of training.
>
> Post graduation pay: $3.25 per hour after graduation to work in the community teaching families.

Fringe benefits: Health insurance program, New York State Employees Retirement System and child care allowance.

SELECTION PROCEDURE MECHANICS

The routine employed was quite orderly and systematic, although the project director often spoke of the early selection as non-scientific and based on the applicant's verbalized interests in the project and the community, as well as her apparent strengths revealed in the interview.

The selection procedure consisted of these steps:

1) Discussion and solicitation of referrals and applications from community organization representatives and leaders.
2) Receipt of written application forms and references on forms provided by the project office.
3) Interview appointment times set with candidates.
4) Each candidate individually interviewed jointly by two key staff members, using prepared interview schedules.
5) Discussion and voting on candidates by all available key staff members.

SELECTION CRITERIA RATIONALE

The staff expanded the general qualifications to include community participation and leadership, and ability to relate. There was never any explicit inquiry about the applicants' own home management practices.

The importance of different criteria changed from wave to wave of trainees as the project took shape and the staff benefited from experience. Ethnic and residential balance, need for the job, and specific needs of the community were also recognized and incorporated into the selection process. Ideas such as selecting a training class of older people to work primarily with senior citizens, or training a group of men, had to be dropped when the decision was made to train only four groups instead of the eight or 10 originally proposed.

Community Participation and Leadership

It was considered vital to select a strong group of women for the first wave of trainees in order to facilitate community acceptance of the program. Therefore the applicant's past participation and leadership in community organizations weighed heavily, particularly in the eyes of the project director. Participation by recognized community leaders would imply a sanctioning of the project which was thought likely to help the project acquire status and credibility. Women in leadership roles were expected to know and reflect the opinions and values of the community. Their reactions as participants could provide continuing community influence on the project even though the family assistants had no official role in policy making.

Ability to Relate

Dedication to the community, empathy, and interest in people and their problems were high priority selection criteria which the project staff referred to by the imprecise term, "ability to relate." The assistant director for training described how these factors were judged in the interview with the applicants:

> . . . we went on personality and the crucial question was concern for the community. There were several times when we had people who were really putting us on and you could sort of tell that. They were a little too smooth in the things [they said] about their concern for the community. But that was our prime interest--how we reacted to them, how they reacted to us on a personal level plus this interest in the community.

Ethnic Balance and Need for Spanish Language Skills

Ethnic balance was hard to maintain because of the difficulty in finding white women and Spanish-speaking women who were interested, qualified, and available.

Balance by Residence

There was an attempt to draw family assistants from each of the two housing projects and the surrounding community. The criterion of residential balance had to be set aside at times for higher priority criteria including language skill, ability to relate, or leadership potential.

Need for Employment

There was a serious attempt to select women on welfare or otherwise badly in need of employment. An applicant in this category would be given preference over one equally well qualified by other criteria. Key staff were not unanimous in the importance attached to this criterion.

Description of Family Assistants Accepted

The women selected by this process were an impressive group to the occasional research visitor from Ithaca. In addition, their appearances before college classes and faculty groups almost invariably led to favorable comments about their vigor, enthusiasm, and articulateness. Those chosen to represent the group radiated enthusiasm for the project as it enabled them to play an effective part in helping their neighbors and community. At the same time they were not reluctant to point out the project's shortcomings and what they thought to be the errors written into the proposal. Hostility was expressed freely by some and indirectly by others.

The dramatic contrast between their ability to express themselves orally and in writing was unexpected. The vividness of their language is evident in some of the excerpts from tape recorded interviews used later in this report.

More specific data are available for some waves than for others because the selection interviews became more structured and comprehensive as the project went along and recording became more systematic.

Ethnic Origin and Language Facility

The ethnic origins of the family assistants were quite diverse. Twenty were black, 14 were Spanish-speaking, three were white, and one was oriental. Fifteen were born outside the continental United States, seven in Puerto Rico, six in Panama, Cuba, and other Central and South American countries, one in England, and one in Japan.

Some of those who had grown up and gone to school outside the United States were genuinely bilingual but seven had only marginal proficiency in English. Their lack of facility was a handicap throughout the training and in many aspects of job performance but the acute need for Spanish-speaking family assistants had to be met if the Spanish-speaking community was to be reached.

Except when language was an effective barrier, black family assistants worked with a few white and Puerto Rican families as well as black families and vice versa. In contacts of long duration the family assistants tended to work with families whose backgrounds were similar to their own. However, there were exceptions. The fact that the women continued working together in reasonable harmony during a period when many blacks and Puerto Ricans were sharply divided and competing for control of community services was an achievement in itself, and one for which the key staff was largely responsible.

Age, Family Composition, and Source of Income

At the time of application, family assistants ranged in age from 24 to 64 years, with an average of 35 years. Twelve were in their 20's, 17 in their 30's, 7 in their 40's, and one each in her 50's and 60's.

Twenty-one were living with their husbands, 15 were separated or divorced, and two widowed. A few of the husbands were disabled or unemployed. Sixteen were either fully or partially dependent on public assistance and 22 were not.

Almost all had children at home, some young and some in their teens. Some were responsible for grandchildren or foster children. The median number of children was three and the mean 3.5, with a range from 0 to 8. Seventeen women had children under six years old and 23 had children six to 11 years old. Seven women had children in both age groups. It is evident that satisfactory child care arrangements had to be part of the project planning.

Prior Education

Formal educational experience ranged from one person with only five years of school to one with a college degree. Five had eight years or less, 15 had nine to 11 years. and 17 had completed 12th grade. For some who had grown up in other countries it was hard to convert school experience into equivalent American terms. In general, the younger women had had more years of formal schooling, especially if they had grown up in New York City.

In addition, several had taken short training courses for human service aides offered by the Social Services Department and/or one or more leadership training courses sponsored by a tenants' association.

Prior Employment

All but five family assistants reported having held paying jobs away from home at some time in their lives, some fairly steadily and some only intermittently. For a few, work on this project was the first paid employment after years at home bringing up families. Unskilled work in a factory or warehouse was the most frequently mentioned type of work. Other jobs mentioned by seven to nine women each, were domestic, waitress, nurses' aide, sales, and clerical. Seven had some recent experience in day camps or similar community service projects. A very small number had worked in jobs such as beautician and bookkeeper for which they had had vocational high school training.

Most of the jobs had been of brief duration such as a few months, with none described as lasting much more than two years. Women with several years of work experience had held a number of different jobs. None of the women described long periods of employment in jobs that they found intrinsically satisfying. Job satisfaction beyond the paycheck was rarely mentioned spontaneously. Applicants in Wave I and II were asked about their most recent jobs while in Wave III and IV they were asked about previous jobs as well. Closer scrutiny of past employment experience might have been helpful in establishing reasonable work expectations and need for supervisory direction.

When husbands' jobs were mentioned, they were semi-skilled or skilled jobs, usually requiring stability but not much training. Several were employed in public or quasi-public positions such as the post office and hospitals or colleges and others worked in garages, factories, or laboratories. Occupation was a sensitive or confidential area of inquiry so information is meager.

The husbands were reported to be pleased with the idea of the project when the women applied, and later several told the director how well things were going at home. This suggests that the women were going into the project with their husbands' encouragement.

Activities Outside Home and Employment

The detailed interview schedules used for the third and fourth waves included questions about organization membership and leadership positions. Some applicants for Waves I and II mentioned organizations in addition to the groups which had referred them to the project. Well over half of the family assistants mentioned belonging to parents' groups connected with public and parochial schools, or Headstart. At least 13 belonged to tenants' associations, and three to block associations. Twelve mentioned church-related organizations. A few had been scout leaders and Sunday school teachers, and a few mentioned involvement in the neighborhood poverty corporation and the welfare rights organization.

The number of different organizations listed by individual family assistants ranged from zero to six, with an average of 2.4 among the family assistants in Waves III and IV. Very few reported no organizational affiliation at all.

All these figures are conservative because the question was not asked directly to trainees in Waves I and II. Wave I was known to include women active in organizations. When this question was asked directly the level of participation mentioned was higher.

Aspirations

Some questions were asked about family assistants' short term aspirations for themselves and their families. The most frequent answers showed an interest in improving living arrangements, either by moving or fixing up the present apartment. A second common response was to plan a vacation trip, or to visit relatives in the south or Puerto Rico. A few said they would buy a car or new furniture.

Long-range aspirations for the children almost always included college. A few acknowledged that individual differences among children would influence their plans. A desire for more education and higher status work for themselves was less often mentioned than for their children.

THE COMPOSITE PICTURE

A composite picture of the family assistants is one of diversity in origin and personal style. However, there was a consistent pattern showing lives centered around family, home, school, and church. The community organizations that attracted the family assistants were based in these institutions. Militancy was directed at improving education, housing, child care, and job opportunities for women. Some family assistants immediately showed strong interest in sewing, recipes and cooking, and making their apartments more attractive, while others were only mildly interested. They were almost unanimously concerned with conditions affecting children in school and out. They agreed on the importance of the major problems threatening their homes and families--increasing drug use, incredibly bad housing, and inadequate schools. Their approaches to authority differed. Some of the Spanish-speaking women appeared more willing to trust authority than the black women. Some of the women in more secure circumstances became increasingly militant as their experience in the project opened their eyes to some of the conditions around them and the difficulty of correcting them on an individual basis.

Reasons for Low Attrition

Successful recruiting and training may be inferred from the low attrition rate. Only one woman resigned while in training and, including her, only seven left before the project's phasing down (1/1/71). The reasons given were personal and family problems for three, more permanent jobs for two, pregnancy for one, and dissatisfaction for one. Between January 1 and June 30, 1971 family assistants were encouraged to take other jobs if they had a chance and eight did so. Several were employed by the Cornell Nutrition Education Program. Twenty-three were still on the payroll in June, 1971.

One factor in the project's ability to hold staff was undoubtedly the pay scale. A survey made by the research staff in 1970 showed that the hourly rates paid to family assistants were equal to or higher than rates in other agencies employing homemakers in the metropolitan area. They paralleled the rates paid to paraprofessionals with supervisory responsibilities.

The fringe benefits were attractive. The extra baby-sitting allowance for pre-school children during both training and employment, was unusual and was necessitated by the lack of space in day care centers.

For some women the convenience of working part time near home was so great that they turned down job opportunities that would have taken them out of the community for the entire day.

The configuration of advantages clearly outweighed any disadvantages in the eyes of the family assistants.

Evaluation of Family Assistants

One of the objectives of the Cornell-OEO Project was to learn more about the "selection and effective involvement of indigenous low-income workers in human resources projects." Distinct individual differences in the way the family assistants approached their jobs, their service load, and their personal development in job-related skills were evident to those working closely with them on a day-to-day basis.

Near the close of the project both the research staff and the key staff became seriously interested in trying to evaluate the family assistants' performance. The project director was influenced by the need to prepare recommendations as many of the family assistants would be seeking jobs. This evaluation process dealt with a relevant problem that had immediate payoff for the on-site staff and resulted in ready cooperation.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH GOALS

The major questions the research staff hoped to answer in this evaluation were:

1) What characteristics were typical of the effective family assistant who carried out a paraprofessional role in this project?

2) How do the ratings on the components of the role relate to rating on overall job performance?

PROCEDURES

The evaluation procedure was set up to be sufficiently clear and easy to do so that it could be completed by on-site staff without requiring the presence of an Ithaca research staff member. The project director pretested the method under the supervision of the research staff in Ithaca. His reactions and questions were used to improve instructions before materials were prepared for the remainder of the staff.

The procedure relied almost entirely on a card sorting arrangement with a minimal amount of writing. Basic materials included a set of 3 x 5 cards for each rater with each family assistant's name on a separate card, and a large sheet of paper on which the cards were to be arrayed into five categories of equal size for each dimension rated. Within each category the cards were to be arranged by ranking individuals from best to worst with names recorded in the appropriate spaces. This was done first for overall job performance and later for five job components.

Written instructions explained overall job performance and defined the five job components as well as explaining steps in the procedure.

> Overall job performance: Job performance includes several job components that you will have a chance to rate separately later. In this section we want your overall balanced opinion of how this family assistant compares with all others in the project knowing that everyone has some strengths and some weaknesses. Your rating should be based on your personal observations, not what you have been told by others. As far as possible your rating should not be based on how well you like this family assistant personally, but on her overall contribution to the project.

Component definitions were:

> Responsibility: A responsible person can be counted on to fulfill obligations to employer, clientele, and others.
>
> Communication skills: By communication skills we mean a combination of the use of language, understanding, gathering and reporting information, etc. What we want here is your judgment on an overall basis about the family assistant's ability to communicate.
>
> Personal relations: By personal relations we mean the way the family assistant gets along with people, especially other people in the project, including those she works with, those in supervisory positions, and those she tries to help in one way or another. In other words, we are asking about overall human relations skills on the job, not her own family or other private relationships.
>
> Personal proficiency and resourcefulness: We mean a combination of skills and attitudes that together enable a person to manage his own affairs effectively. In this section we are not thinking of specific job skills but a general quality of personal competence.
>
> Job skills specific to this project: No explicit definition.

More detailed performance evaluation was planned near the close of the project but schedule and time priorities made it impossible.

DATA ANALYSIS

The six key staff members working independently first completed the ratings on overall performance. The three senior staff members rated 22, 34, and 38 family assistants respectively, and each divided his total number into five approximately equal-sized groups. Two of the junior staff members, who had been with the project for a year or less, knew fewer family assistants and therefore rated only 17 and 18 individuals respectively, while the third rated 36. Under the original instructions the forced distribution with an equal number of family assistants in each of the five groups would have made each rater's average score three, when five is the highest rating possible and one is the lowest. However, because the junior staff members tended to place people in tied clusters rather than distributing them into five equal groups, the raters' averages ranged from 2.67 to 3.61. For purposes of analysis all scores for overall job performance were converted to standard (Z) scores.

The transformed scores were summed, means computed, and a ranking from one to 36 on overall job performance determined. Data on two of the 38 family assistants were eliminated due to too few ratings and inconsistencies. The distribution of ranks on overall job performance was divided into three groups labeled high, medium, and low performance with 12 family assistants in each group. Background information obtained at the time people were hired and subsequently while employed was studied for patterns that might be predictive of job performance.

The staff also sorted the family assistant cards into five groups on each of the components of job performance. Each family assistant's average ranking from all judges for each of the five components was determined. This average was then assigned a rank. The standard score conversion was not employed when analyzing the components. Spearman Rho correlations were run using each component's rank and overall job performance rank. The object was to determine which components were most highly correlated with overall job performance rankings.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PARAPROFESSIONALS

1) The top rated third was slightly older, with a mean age of 38 years, versus 34 years for the other two groups. Age ranges overlapped from group to group.
2) In keeping with the top group's higher age, their position in the life cycle was more advanced, with their children's ages ranging from preschool up through the teens.
3) Family situation in the top group appears more secure from the standpoint of having an intact family and regular support from earnings. In the top third, 10 out of 12 were living with their husbands. Nine of the husbands were employed and only three of the 12 were partially or wholly dependent on public assistance. In the middle and low groups the proportion of intact families with employed husbands was lower and the percent dependent on public assistance was higher.

4) Organizational participation was more common among the top ranked family assistants, with three-fourths of the women in the top group reporting membership in more than one organization and one a single membership. In the low group only one family assistant reported membership in more than one organization while six mentioned belonging to only one group.

5) Previous employment also differentiated among the three evaluative groups. The women in the top group had had more different jobs. Types of previous employment were diversified, ranging from unskilled domestic and factory work to semiskilled personal service and clerical. Eight of the top 12 had factory work experience that probably required punctuality and regular attendance. Only four of the 12 in the lower group had worked in factories. In general, holding several previous jobs was associated with high ranking on overall job performance. However, one of the women in the top group had had no previous employment.

6) Ethnic data were so difficult to interpret that a special analysis was run to rule out rater bias on ethnic lines. Ability to speak Spanish had sometimes been given priority over other selection criteria. The average rating for Puerto Rican and other Spanish-speaking aides was lower than for other ethnic groups. Nevertheless, three were found in the top 12 and two of these had severe problems with English. The top 12 also included six of the 20 blacks. The sample was too small to permit generalizations with any degree of confidence.

7) Past participation in adult training appears to be related to overall job performance rank. Eight family assistants participated in leadership training offered by the tenants' association and the New York City Department of Social Services' CHANCE program (Classes in Home Arts, Nutrition, and Consumer Education). Four were in the top ranked group, three in the middle group, and only one in the lower ranked group.

NONDISCRIMINATING CHARACTERISTICS

Some experiences and background characteristics did not appear to discriminate between high and low ranked family assistants on overall job performance.

1) Formal educational level, especially among the older black family assistants, did not seem to be critical. Seven of the 12 in the top group had not completed high school and three had eighth grade education or less. In comparison five of the 12 in the low group had completed high school and four others had between nine and 11 years of schooling.

2) Birthplace is not a basis for predicting success. Five of the top 12 and six of the bottom 12 were born outside the country. All six in the low group were from Spanish-speaking countries and had language difficulty.

3) Source of referral to the program shows no clearcut pattern. Six of the women in the top group were recommended by tenants' associations or neighborhood social service agencies and the other six heard about the project by word of mouth or had participated through visits by other family assistants. The ratio was about the same for the 12 family assistants in the lowest group.

An incidental finding showed there were high and low ranked family assistants in each training wave. The top ranked 12 were distributed with Waves I and II each having three members, Wave III had one, and Wave IV had five. Half of the family assistants in Wave IV were in the top group compared to one quarter of those in Wave I. On the other hand, five from Wave I were in the bottom group, two from Wave II, one from Wave III, and four from Wave IV.

All these results contrasting the high and low rated groups are based on such a small number of cases that statistical tests were not even attempted. The information offers leads for recruiting paraprofessionals in urban settings and for planning to help those who might be expected to have difficulty on the job.

JOB COMPONENT ANALYSIS

The second question investigated through the performance analysis was the relationship of job components to overall job performance. A high correlation between a component and overall job performance suggests that this aspect of job performance is strongly related to effectiveness. All the correlation coefficients were statistically significant at the .01 level using Spearman Rho, a test that employs ranked data to determine the relationship between two variables involving a small sample. It must be recognized that correlational data does not constitute evidence of causality between two variables. The relationship could be due to a third shared variable or totally independent factors.

1) Responsibility correlated highest with overall job performance. This dimension describes being a reliable worker with clients' and organizations' concerns in mind. The Rho was .88.

2) Job skills specific to the project also correlated highly with a Rho of .82.

3) The proficiency and resourcefulness component was a rating of personal competence that correlated .74 with overall job performance.

4) Maintaining personal relations was the dimension thought so critical when initial hiring was done. It was spoken of as the ability to establish rapport and to relate to people. This factor correlated .72; so was a contributing factor, but not the most highly correlated component. It can best be viewed as a necessary, but not sufficient attribute contributing to job effectiveness.

5) Communication skills produced the lowest correlation with overall job performance with a .55. The lower magnitude of this correlation can be explained in part by the fact that two people in the top 12 on overall job performance were in the bottom group on communication skills. The meaning of ratings on this dimension is difficult to interpret because it was not possible to identify written and oral skills separately and no distinction was made between communication with families and communication with the staff.

The reasonably high correlations for all components and overall performance might also be a result of the rater's halo effect or the indiscriminate rating of people at about the same performance level on various dimensions.

OTHER EVALUATION EFFORTS

The judgments by project staff found confirmation in the evaluations of family assistants made by the Red Cross homemaker-home health aide instructors. This evidence indicates that the key staffs' overall job performance ranking reflected a mode of functioning by family assistants that could be observed in more than one setting.

Another evaluation effort in June, 1971 followed the community leadership training course and was supervised by the two trainers. Nineteen family assistants completed an evaluation procedure in which each one evaluated herself and at least one other family assistant.

The purpose of this evaluation was to discover changes in self-awareness resulting from the leadership training. The focus of this training and evaluation was different from the project job performance evaluation and so was the evaluation procedure. Therefore, no attempt was made to correlate these ratings with the earlier ones.

The noteworthy fact is that the family assistants were willing to participate in this type of self evaluation and it offers evidence of the training experience's impact. Family assistants would not have been willing to do this type of appraising at the outset of the project even on less emotionally ladened material.

CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation of family assistants by the key staff members showed that a meaningful evaluation procedure could be carried out.

There appear to be complex patterns of background variables that might serve as predictors of performance level. Some family assistants rated low in certain job component skills were rated highly on overall job performance. Their compensatory skills or knowledge enabled them to perform effectively. Although the ratings were done separately, there was a great deal of consistency in the assignment of performance ratings. This consistency in ratings can be taken as evidence of the validity of the individual differences in performance that were found.

It was also apparent that traditionally accepted credentials such as formal education and prior work experience would have excluded some excellent candidates. Each applicant should be considered in relation to the project's goals and the people to be served. To judge on an arbitrary basis in this setting is inappropriate.

The Multiple Roles of the Family Assistant

The role of the family assistant pictured in the project proposal was that of teaching homemaker as distinguished from the substitute homemaker or the home health aide employed in many other projects. In addition to teaching, the family assistant was expected to give information about available community resources. She also was to be a source of moral support and counseling by means of the sympathetic one-to-one relationship.

THE ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTION

During the life of the project the family assistants took on a number of other roles, but interacting with families on a one-to-one basis was the role the research staff studied most carefully. A classification system was developed for the varied services given in these contacts with families. The two major departures from the original teaching role were personal service and expediting, the term used for many activities enabling families to secure the help of agencies.

When human resource projects start with specialized competence they often encounter service needs broader than their defined task. There are two principal options open. They can either expand into general service or stay within their original narrow service definition. Efficiency dictates the restricted definition option since it avoids dissipation of time and energy on activity that personnel are not trained to handle or that another organization can handle equally well or considers its own. However, this efficiency option may jeopardize the project's relevance or even credibility in the community's eyes if it appears that the program is not responsive to community needs. This dilemma was a recurrent problem in the project, as consumer education had a low priority in the eyes of many people. The decision was first to endorse a broad definition and after the project had stabilized to sharpen the focus of work at the individual level while broadening its efforts at the community level.

FAMILY ASSISTANTS' EXPANDED ROLE

When family assistants were selected, a major criterion was their ability to establish rapport. It was assumed that after establishing rapport they could adapt their training to the needs of the community residents. They were to teach homemakers those aspects of home management from their training course that seemed relevant to the homemaker's individual interests and needs. They were also to give information about community resources that might lead to alleviation of problems outside of the home management field. Project planners and leaders clearly recognized that family assistants were not expected to perform a housekeeping or domestic function, but this proved to be difficult to explain to families and other agencies.

The strategy was to start where people were, with whatever problems they had. Referral and counseling were intended to supplement and sometimes to provide an entree for teaching, but often became the major focus of activity because families had so many problems and encountered difficulty in getting effective help. In addition, acting as advocates and interveners was personally gratifying to many family assistants.

Activities performed by family assistants and reported consistently enabled the research staff to identify the many facets of their expanded one-to-one service role.

1) Teaching: showing, explaining, demonstrating, comparison shopping.
2) Personal service: doing something for a family or individual, like washing dishes or shopping for the family in contrast to a demonstration of a new method or teaching principles of careful shopping.
3) Expediting - helping and interpreting: may include personal service which enables a person to use resources, such as baby-sitting, translating, or escort service.
4) Expediting - educative: informing families of resources available and procedures for using them, making appointments, or filling out applications.
5) Expediting - intervention: efforts made when routine procedures or systems do not work. It includes interceding with agencies, merchants, or landlords in an advocate role.
6) Moral support and counseling: providing a sympathetic ear, helping people to sort out their alternative choices.
7) Explanation of project services only.

Teaching

Because of the College's major interest in extension teaching, and the project's stated goals, records of family visits were carefully read for evidence of teaching efforts. Both successful and unsuccessful examples were sought. The majority of the family assistants went over the home management topics with most families at least once. When a topic and a teaching activity were mentioned several times for the same family, responsiveness to teaching was inferred. When thinking of teaching, family assistants tended to have a formal pattern in mind and were often reluctant to claim that they were teachers. Comments such as "showed her how to . . ." or "took her shopping for . . ." were classified as teaching. The family assistant's skill and her concept of her role seemed to affect whether she made a simple activity like a shopping trip into an occasion for teaching or simply a routine service. The family assistants were given the benefit of the doubt when data were classified as teaching.

The following examples show how service and teaching of budgeting and home decoration could be combined, and the kind of preparation that sometimes preceded a visit. The record for the whole trip might show up in a word or two or on a check list, but interviews made the teaching activity clearer.

> Her problem is budgeting and decoration. She wants to do something about her home. This will be a long operation because we are going to see how we can save to do this and that . . . I have

> explained to her that I will make some draperies for the windows later on when we get some material, but there are so many more little things that come before this. We learned how to make a lot of low cost recipes which will make her food bill a little cheaper and after a month or so we will be able to save something. Every week now I go shopping with her. We wait until my husband comes and together we go and we do better because I can say, "I think this is a better buy. All right, this may be more than we need, but if we get this we won't have to buy this for a whole month." You know we figure it out like that.

The same family assistant and her partner had become deeply committed to a young family with a desperately sick child. The urgency of this situation had kept them from visiting other families, but they had taken time for some comparison shopping.

> We have been shopping. One night we spent from five till nine in three stores downtown. We were trying to find which were the best ones for rugs because she wants to get a good carpet. She ended up getting it from . . . (store name) which we thought wouldn't be the best buy but we found that . . . (same store) had the best buy and she ended up getting it there.
>
> The other thing she wants us to help her with is [more] comparison shopping. I went with her once but that isn't half enough because she is very young. I haven't had a chance to go back with her but we will get around to that.

Some contacts with families were never recorded and would only come to light in an interview.

> I went comparison shopping with acquaintances because they knew we were in the program and they wanted to buy furniture. So I went twice. That was not a family I was working with. It was just someone that knows that I am in the program and the training we have had.

Another example of an unrecorded contact follows.

> We haven't been able to work with some of the people on what they would like because a lot of them want interior decorating, have a limited budget and want to do something with the apartment. But we haven't had time to go into that because that would entail going to stores and comparing prices and seeing what they.could afford. So we have been seeing them. You meet them and you talk to them and you explain, "I'll try to get you in sometime," but you don't put that down. We are in contact with these people constantly but we are not going to the store with them, so we don't count them.

A frequent request, toward the end of the first year, was for recipes that could be used with surplus foods. Other teaching dealt with use of storage space, sewing, easier ways to clean the house, planning and preparing meals, and how to care for a baby-- especially a sick baby.

Family assistants often said during training and in-service training sessions that they felt unsure of themselves in the teaching role. They needed help with techniques as well as content. Their problem was summarized toward the end of the project by one of the supervisory staff.

> One thing that I didn't consider was that family assistants viewed themselves as neighborhood families and they had a terribly difficult time in terms of beginning to fulfill the role of paraprofessional. They had a problem in the beginning to transmit this kind of information to other families.

Personal Service

Personal service activities were those in which the family assistants did something for a family with very little if any attempt at teaching. Examples were cleaning the apartment or equipment, preparing a meal, or shopping that took the form of running errands. For the elderly or handicapped person these were important services, but in terms of the project's teaching focus they were not necessarily appropriate for the family assistants to give repeatedly.

There were other personal services that apparently meant a great deal to an elderly person, such as writing a letter for him, reading to him, caring for an elderly lady's hair or simply stopping in regularly to see if she was all right.

Less personal service was recorded for younger families. When it occurred, it was likely to be help with child care or helping a family obtain used clothing.

Expediting

Expediting was so frequent that it was possible to identify at least three patterns--helping and interpreting, educative, and intervention. The need to help people make effective use of the maze of specialized agencies in the big cities has been widely recognized. The importance of expediting as a paraprofessional role has been discussed by Miller and Riessman (21) and their writing influenced the classification system used here.

Expediting - helping and interpreting

This type of expediting was separated from personal services in order to identify an activity that enabled people to make use of existing agencies. The family assistants found that merely to provide knowledge about available agencies was not enough for many families. Baby-sitting for a mother so she could to to a clinic, accompanying a mother with several children, carrying a child wearing heavy braces, or acting as a Spanish-English translator at an agency would fall in this category. These activities were more appropriate for family assistants to provide than repetitious housekeeper or domestic type of service.

During the second year of the project family assistants were urged to encourage the families to make their own arrangements for agency visits. The project administration felt that some families had become excessively dependent. However, the family assistants continued to provide basic information on agency services.

Expediting - educative

A second type of expediting included giving information about the existence of service, rules of eligibility and procedures for obtaining help. A great many hours were spent in trying to locate specialized services for people with various handicaps. It was frequently necessary to go with the person to help him file an application. After the application was filed it was usually not necessary to go back repeatedly.

As family assistants became more familiar with the rules of the various agencies, they developed more skill as expeditors. With the help of the Welfare Rights Organization and Department of Social Services spokesmen they learned some of the rules of the department. They found out how to get authorization for a housekeeper needed by an elderly or ill family, and found it was often necessary to locate a person willing to take the job when the Social Services Department had no one available. This sometimes led to a whole series of new problems when there was dissatisfaction between the family and the housekeeper. Occasionally the family assistant took on the task of helping the housekeeper with shopping or meal planning.

Spanish-speaking families often lacked basic information about agencies--such as availability of clinics. In other families it was not so much lack of knowledge of the existence of an agency that kept them away as past experiences with long waits, indifferent treatment and inability to obtain help. Family assistants readily sympathized with the difficulty in making use of agencies as many of them had had the same experiences.

Expediting - intervention

This was a type of activity that for some family assistants "came naturally." Playing the advocacy role with the bureaucracy on behalf of a family was apparently very satisfying when successful. They learned very quickly that getting the needy person to the agency did not necessarily mean that service could be obtained.

The family assistants found their intervention in the name of the Cornell-OEO Project succeeded in getting more rapid attention and sometimes in gaining access to service that the family would not otherwise have obtained. As might be expected, this in turn created some resentment on the part of other people waiting for attention in a big agency.

Moral Support and Counsel

In some instances the family assistants' visit provided people with a sympathetic listener and a sounding board for their troubles. More often than not this activity was accompanied by several other types of service. Counseling in some instances involved complex long-term problems like drug use that the family assistants found they could not handle, not just because of agency deficiencies but because of resistance of the individual. During the second year they were advised not to attempt this type of counseling.

ROLE PERCEPTIONS

Thus far the discussion has centered on the role as it was analyzed by the research staff. Equally interesting is the subjective interpretation of the role and reactions to their experiences as recorded by family assistants in writing and occasional interviews. As has been mentioned, teaching was a less comfortable role and less easily assumed than some of the other one-to-one activities.

Credibility and Identification with Neighbors

Family assistants strongly believed that paraprofessionals had a compassionate attitude toward their neighbors that was not to be found in the professional worker. This feeling is made clear in the following comments by three family assistants:

> She lives there and she knows the people and she knows the problems of the neighborhood. The family senses that a social worker just works there. It is just a job. They talk and leave. Here the family assistant is a person that talks and stays.

There was also a sense of identity and empathy with neighbors that at times created difficulties for the family assistants. Conversely, there was general rejoicing when they succeeded in getting a merchant to replace defective merchandise or refund the money.

> The door-to-door salesman comes around and a mother signs a paper saying she is going to buy encyclopedias or something and it might come to $200 or $300. These people really don't have the money and it is almost as if it happened to you. You get very upset.

Another indication of this involvement was articulated in this way:

> I get very personally involved with the families and their problems and I would like to do much more than four hours of work with them. And there are times when I do do it. Because there are so many things that will happen and you just can't very well say, "Gee, my time is up, save it for tomorrow." We get very involved because we live here.

One of the tasks of the supervisory staff was to try to preserve the family assistants' spontaneity and empathy while encouraging objectivity and a realistic assessment of capacities. Role definition was one of the topics most often mentioned in reports on sensitivity training sessions.

Informal Approach

Many times the family assistants operated on a very informal basis. Especially in the early stages of the project they seemed to be on duty round the clock. The community residents did not respect their working hours and the family assistants did not know how to set limits without feeling they were refusing to help. They often did not differentiate their paid role as a project representative from their personal role as neighbor.

> Most of the time I'll just stop to talk to someone who is talking about food shopping and I make suggestions because we have gotten so many leaflets on what to look for in buying. I'll just ask them, "how would you like me to come up this evening? I can give you some of the booklets and if you like anything, I'll get you some copies."

This same informality and search for opportunities to make contact was done by helping introduce new residents to the community.

> If someone new moves into the community we will take them shopping and show them where the stores are and get them acquainted with the neighborhood and schools. We have a special service school in our area. We try to explain what a special service school is, when the local school board meets, and about the local PTA.

Along with this informality the family assistant had the ability to recognize that people do not like to be told what to do even if it is good advice.

> So we don't come in and say, "Look do you have any problems, we will solve them" We just sit and discuss. We also discuss buying on credit, because a lot of people have been taken.

Futility in the Advocacy Role

Often the family assistants shared the frustrations of a neighbor when working unsuccessfully with cases that required an advocacy role.

> I am working now with a family who has been trying for the last six years to get into public housing. She has two rooms that they live in and there are four people in the family. She has a girl 12 and a boy who is nine. The woman has had a fine home. It is very difficult to go into someone's apartment and start talking about home decorating or even planning a meal when "where are we going to live?" is really uppermost in their minds. It is hard to do anything and it gets very frustrating because we can't make headway. Sometimes you can if the house falls down around your ears. They might do something then.

Power of Organizational Affiliation

One of the more rewarding experiences for the family assistants was discovering that their affiliation with the project made it possible for them to perform what appeared to be miracles. This tended to confirm their belief that agencies could help if they wanted to. Expediting was the role family assistants regarded as their most valuable service.

> I have found one thing. A title counts no matter what you call it; if it is a title, people are impressed. I know someone that had to get her child into a special school. She learns at a much slower pace. So I spoke to the guidance counselor. She told me proudly,

> "well, I've been working on this case for two and one half years." I said to her, "and you're bragging about it? Does it take two and a half years to get one kid into a class?" She said, "There are many problems." I said, "Tell you what, just give me the name of the place I have to contact." She said to me, "Well, they just don't talk to anybody." I said, "That's all right," and I gave her my title as family assistant and "I work for the Cornell-OEO." So she got me an appointment for the woman. This was Monday and Wednesday she had an appointment with the psychologist. He tested the child and this week or next week they will know what school the child will be put into.

ADDITIONAL AND EXPANDED PARAPROFESSIONAL ROLES

In addition to the major teaching and expediting roles, the family assistants in this project played several roles that are frequently assigned to paraprofessionals and some that are not so common.

Bridge, Interpreter

Like many other paraprofessionals they were expected to serve as a bridge between outside professionals and local consumers of services. This role includes vouching for the credibility of the professionals, interpreting the professional message to the local people and explaining local needs to the outsiders. It is considered important because it results in extending the benefits of professional expertise to a larger audience than professionals could otherwise reach. Debate is going on about whether adding paraprofessionals to an ongoing agency means improving service or watering it down, but in this project there was no previously established service so it was paraprofessional service nor none. (9)

Interpretation of the project at the one-to-one level was left almost entirely to family assistants as described in the section on recruiting families. The director was the major spokesman at the community level.

Gatekeeper

A related role is sometimes described as the "gatekeeper" who admits professionals to the neighborhood and secures cooperation for them or excludes them. He serves a screening function. Local leaders including prospective family assistants were performing this function when they met with key staff early in 1969. Family assistants were gatekeepers again when they selected families that a research associate could interview and made appointments for her. Most of the time the gate was closed to researchers.

Community Service Worker, Organizer, and Political Activist

An unexpected role developed when family assistants were asked to help in projects like the neighborhood nutrition and health fairs, and a health department drive to locate houses where there was danger of lead poisoning. Some experience was gained in organizing small groups and making arrangements for meetings where demonstrations would be given. In addition, several family assistants appeared at public hearingson consumer affairs and they helped in a voter registration drive.

Closely related was the role of spokesman for neighborhood needs and influencer of public policy. They had several sessions with political figures representing city, state, and national levels. To systematize this role the director organized five committees in January, 1970. Each included one key staff member and the family assistants who volunteered. Each had one of the topics of community-wide concern--housing, education, shopping facilities, day care, and drugs. Each committee was to study the problem assigned to it and work with other neighborhood groups with the same concerns. Only the housing and education committee actually met very often. This experience was a step away from the oversimplified demand for more services heard so much in 1969, and showed the leaders that most of the family assistants needed much more help before they could manage all the steps in long-range planning for social action on their own.

The organizer and activist part of this role required more skill than either the staff or family assistants recognized at first. The leadership training course given in 1971 was an attempt to strengthen the family assistants' ability to carry on this role successfully after the project ended.

Source of Influence on Project Policy

Though there was no formal mechanism or designated responsibility, the family assistants had a significant effect on the course of the project. They communicated their point of view in training class sessions, informally with the on-site staff, and on those occasions when they visited the College in Ithaca or met with the research staff on the site.

They pushed the administrative staff and the research group in the direction of finding help with high priority problems--the second level of concern.

Expanded Teaching Role

The interaction between project and College campus gave the family assistants a unique teaching role not pictured in the proposal. Several appeared before formal classes, faculty meetings, and professional conferences.

Another variation of the one-to-one teaching role will be described later in the section on work with small informal groups.

Research Data Gatherer

Perhaps the most unusual role for the family assistants and the one most strongly resisted was that of data collector. The research staff assumed that in endorsing the project the local women had accepted the research participation as well but this did not prove to be the case. For many family assistants it seemed like a betrayal to record and submit data about families and services and they did not like to think of themselves as subjects of research. The compromise agreed on was that they would withhold information about families that they regarded as confidential or potentially damaging.

This data gathering role created strong conflicts for family assistants except when it concerned impersonal data like surveys of housing conditions or appliance prices. It was also a role for which their past work and education had not prepared them. No research training was provided for either family assistants or group workers except for instructions to follow in entering the data on forms. These assignments often were regarded as an extra chore.

PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT AS A GROWTH EXPERIENCE

The diversity and flexibility of the roles played by the family assistants provided many opportunities for personal growth. The women differed widely in their readiness to enter into new experiences and take on unfamiliar responsibilities. Some found keeping up with day to day job obligations along with their own family responsibilities extremely demanding. Consequently, their participation in the broader roles described in the preceding pages was minimal. The level of sophistication of family assistants at the beginning of the project was quite varied as was their teaching ability and knowledge of the program content.

Toward the end of the project the family assistants wrote their own reactions to the project for inclusion in Supplement No. 3, The Cornell-OEO Project through the eyes of the participants. They spoke of program content and objectives to which they would have given higher priority. Mentions of personal growth tended to be concrete gains in skills, not enrichment or strength derived from belonging to a cohesive group and working on common objectives. The requests for reactions may not have encouraged introspection, but whatever the reason there is little of that type of testimony directly from them. No objective measures of self-concept, attitudes, or skills were made; therefore, estimates of family assistants' growth are based primarily on observations of key staff. It is hard to believe that participation in such a wide variety of experiences has not had some lasting effect.

Benefits from the Teacher-Helper Role

Some family assistants recognized and reported on benefits they personally had derived from participating in the training course and in the teacher-helper role.

Course content utilized: Better ways of managing home and money were put into daily practice in their own homes.

Changed self-concept: Some expressed personal satisfaction and changes in their self-concept as they found they were able to be the helper after being dependent on others for most of their lives. This role reversal appears to have considerable psychological significance.

Broadening perspective: Several family assistants saw first hand some of the deplorable conditions in their neighborhood for the first time, especially housing, increasing drug use, and the plight of the aged. They noticed the differences from family to family in living conditions, severity of problems, and capacities to respond to efforts to help them.

They recognized differences in economic status and they spoke of taking Christmas baskets or used clothing to "poor" families. Other families they visited seemed more like their own. This perception of uniqueness in individual circumstances was essential if they were to give appropriate help. Apparently, for professionals accustomed to thinking of low-income people as all pretty much alike, this discrimination is difficult to acquire.

Knowledge of community resources: Since much of the project time was spent in helping families gain access to community services, family assistants accumulated knowledge of resources that they will be able to draw on for their own use and to help others.

Marketable job skills acquired: The average level of skill in approaching families and agencies improved noticeably during the life of the project. Visit reports submitted to the research staff became more explicit and complete. These interpersonal and reporting skills helped some family assistants to find new jobs with the Cornell Nutrition Education program in the area.

Benefits from the Other Roles

The diverse roles beyond teaching and helping described earlier in this section were seldom explicitly identified. Family assistants may not have thought of their organizational and interpretive activities as different roles, but they provided somewhat different growth opportunities for those who participated in them. Some family assistants had very strong feelings about the choice of project goals and conflict about their participation. These feelings were often expressed when there was an opportunity to be the "bridge" or "interpreter," and thereby reduced the possibility of objective analysis by the family assistants.

New experiences: Most of the family assistants had new experiences. Some traveled by airplane, stayed in motels, and described their views of the project and neighborhood problems to an entire college faculty. Others made presentations at consumer hearings in New York City and in the offices of policy makers in Washington and Albany. Family assistants presented ideas to professionals interested in research on low-income and urban problems at a conference in Ithaca. (24) Two family assistants had a chance to present a brief statement on the importance of community participation in program planning to sociologists attending a panel discussion of poverty programs in Washington. (See Appendix C)

Skill in presenting a case: There were satisfactions in being listened to by an attentive high status audience, but more importantly, the advance work for these presentations was a significant learning experience. The key staff worked closely with the family assistants to help them decide what points they wanted to make, who would take responsibility for each topic to be covered, and how best to present it. Speakers had additional sessions to practice what they intended to say. Even nonparticipating family assistants learned to prepare themselves carefully when presenting a case. Post-trip reports enabled everyone on the project staff to share the experience and benefit from the lessons learned. Cooking, sewing, and home decoration demonstrations in the local community were preceded by this same type of careful planning and coaching.

Power to influence policy: Family assistants' expression of concern and preferences had considerable impact on project policy though they apparently remained unaware of their influence. Their frequent and vigorous statements about urgent community problems were at least partially responsible for the project director's efforts to help the community organize more effectively. Although all family assistants were assigned to committees set up to concentrate on community problems, only two of these committees were active; therefore, many of the family assistants may not have been aware of community level activity except when reports were made at staff meetings.

In a similar vein, the majority of the family assistants did not appear to recognize the extent to which the project professionals and College administration supported flexibility in the program activities and encouraged a broad interpretation of the project proposal. The project remained frustrating to the end for those who felt that they had not had adequate influence on policy.

Long-term payoff: Though at this time no one can tell how much carry over there will be to future organizational efforts by family assistants, certain ideas have been emphasized. Sound organization and unity among community factions is essential in order to move ahead for community betterment. This was one of the more vital ideas to which family assistants were repeatedly exposed.

An excerpt from a written commentary by one family assistant conveys her feelings about the project.

> . . . I learned more about my immediate community while with the Cornell-OEO than I have learned in 30 years. I learned to help my neighbor without having money. There were so many ways in which Cornell-OEO helped me that I could never count them. It was a "God-sent" project.

V. TRAINING

Pre-Service Training

One of the distinctive features of the Cornell-OEO Project was training of paraprofessionals and subsequent employment within the same organization. The project staff were in a position to adapt the mechanics and the content of training for successive groups of trainees as experience dictated. This was done for both pre-service and in-service training. In addition, at the close of the project, both the assistant director for training and the family assistants were able to make suggestions for use in future projects.

MECHANICS

Each of the four training courses lasted for eight weeks. The trainees met half days for approximately 20 hours per week. Class sessions were held in the demonstration apartment in Wyckoff Gardens.

Miss Matsen, assistant director for training and service, was the major teacher and coordinator for the first three training waves and served as an advisor for the fourth wave, which was taught by Miss Santia Ruiz, an extension aide. The original plan called for the group worker supervising each wave to attend class sessions with the women in his wave. In this way the supervisor would become well acquainted with his group and would be familiar with the home management information the class was learning. It was also expected that the group workers would contribute to the training process, particularly in the techniques of contacting and working with families. Because of the turnover in group workers this plan was not always realized.

The usual methods of presentation included introductory discussions and demonstrations by Miss Matsen, films and filmstrips, models and bulletin board exhibits of printed material, leaflets distributed to class members, and discussion by class members.

Use of visiting speakers provided both a change of pace and specialized expertise. Many topics were covered at least in part by guests from the Cornell faculty, from New York City agencies responsible for health and welfare services, and from groups concerned with the protection of tenants, consumers, and welfare recipients. The order in which the topics were taken up depended partly on the use that was going to be made of visiting speakers and when they were going to be available.

New York City agency personnel were used most frequently with the first training class. Miss Matsen felt that the family assistants were less likely to be well informed on services and procedures of agencies and protection groups than on home management methods. She expected providing information about agencies to be important in work with families. This approach had several shortcomings. One, the speakers did not always have a clear understanding of the work that the family assistants were being prepared to do. Consequently their talks sometimes seemed irrelevant to family assistants. Family assistants felt their own preparation was insufficient. Some said later that all training time should be devoted to what they viewed as relevant material. A second problem arose from having some of the more controversial topics, such as the appropriate way to bring up minority group children, presented by a single speaker. Miss Matsen felt alternative points of view should be presented by someone with equal status. A third problem was difficulty in setting up appointments and being able to count on a person to appear when expected. There were so many misunderstandings as well as unavoidable cancellations that the instructor learned to keep a standby lesson plan on hand. Standby plans were needed less frequently as time went on. On the other hand, speakers sometimes came only to find part of their time had been preempted and had to hastily reduce what they expected to cover.

The field trip was another technique that worked well and was used often. Some of these trips were to the agencies to which family assistants would later refer people. Trips were made to stores for comparison shopping and to companies where equipment demonstrations were given. There were also visits to organizations such as credit unions where discussions were held with staff members about available services.

The two waves in which the group workers made substantial contributions to the training were Waves III and IV. In the case of Wave III, Miss Matsen and Miss Joyce Shorter, a recent graduate of the New York State College of Human Ecology at Cornell, planned the program together. They arranged for Miss Matsen to present subject matter the first two hours each day, and Miss Shorter to handle the second two hours, showing family assistants ways to use the subject matter when working with families. This approach was carried out whenever possible. Miss Shorter also instituted regular individual conferences with trainees.

With the fourth wave, Les Wright, drawing on previous human relations training, took responsibility for most of the last two weeks. These were devoted primarily to preparations for approaching and working directly with families, discussions of relationships, and interpretation of negative reactions from families they might approach. Miss Ruiz, who was a professional home economist, had direct responsibility for consumer education and home management content.

TRAINING COURSE CONTENT

The course outlines for the four waves were quite similar. The five basic topics were food and nutrition, family health, child care, home furnishings and interior decoration, and financial management and consumer protection.

Each of these topics was allocated approximately a week although the amount of time on a given topic and the order differed from one group to another.

Each training wave started with several days devoted primarily to orientation and administrative matters. The roles of the College, the OEO, and the research component were reviewed. Time was spent completing personnel forms and going over the details of getting paychecks cashed. In addition to these sessions, an informal tea was held to give the trainees a chance to get acquainted with each other and the staff.

The first week included some discussion of the importance of the life cycle in relation to different kinds of family decisions. The initial presentation described home management as similar to a business with planning, purchasing, and record-keeping functions being essential in both settings.

The specific details within each major topic varied somewhat from one group to another. The emphasis depended on the group's particular interests and the instructor's appraisal of what was needed. Specific items that have appeared in training session outlines include the following.

Food and Nutrition. Topics covered were: comparison shopping, importance of reading labels, nutrition, preparing foods and setting up demonstrations, storage and care of food, surplus foods, and food stamps. Members of the class usually had a chance to cook some of their favorite dishes and to exchange recipes. Each group did a price survey in local stores.

Family Health. This general subject included use of both community health resources and household management techniques affecting family health. Speakers discussed medicaid and medicare, clinics, the protective services of the city such as fire and police departments, and efforts to control drug use. The choice and techniques for use of household cleaning products were treated as ways to protect family health, as were accident prevention and safe storage of dangerous materials. Each class visited the Red Hook Health Center which served the area and welcomed the family assistants as helpers in spotting sources of lead poisoning and other activities relating to preventive and corrective health care. Wave IV had 24 hours of Red Cross Home Health Care training in place of some of the other topics.

Child Care. This unit focused on the young child's need for stimulation and led to making creative toys, books, and party preparations as ways to provide stimulation. There was coverage of prenatal care, family relationships, cultural differences, differences in the way different children develop, ways to help young children develop, and discipline and guidance. Adolescent problems were sometimes stressed. Experts were invited to discuss minority group children's special problems. Each of the first three waves had at least one speaker from the Department of Human Development and Family Studies in the New York State College of Human Ecology at Cornell. Films, leaflets, and books were also used.

Home Furnishings and Home Decoration. This unit included use of space, especially storage space; choice of decorations; carpets; color and lighting; and window treatment. Information was provided on buying new and secondhand furniture, comparison shopping, and refinishing furniture.

Sessions also considered the care of curtains, upholstery, carpeting, and floors. The assistant director relied heavily on Cornell staff in planning this topic for the first three waves. Speakers brought in slides, films, and some fabric samples. They demonstrated how to measure for curtains and how to make cardboard storage units. There were also field trips to furniture stores to illustrate high-pressure, poor quality shopping situations and others showing opportunities for getting good values. Trainee interest in this topic led to the home furnishing workshops.

In view of the acute housing problem in the area, some time was spent on services available to help tenants get housing codes enforced and in discussion of the legal aspects of recent eviction notices. Housing Authority regulations were also covered.

Financial Management and Consumer Protection. This unit included credit contracts, protection against fraud, spending plans, "stopping money leaks," and general principles of buying and using credit. Attention was given to consumer problems such as repossession and deficiency judgments.

In an effort to avoid inflexible solutions and oversimplified absolute answers to questions, Miss Matsen tried to convey general principles and not to teach that one method or another was absolutely correct or always better. For example, she would try to show that a certain class or type of cleaning product was cheaper or more effective than others; not that "brand X" was the best product. A principle of economical food buying was illustrated by emphasizing that the ready-to-eat foods usually cost more than others requiring the consumer's time to ready them for cooking. The question becomes a matter of choice. Do you choose to spend your money for the convenience of saving your time?

The course outline followed closely the outline developed during the feasibility study. Miss Matsen said, after teaching it several times, that she felt it would have been better to spend considerably more time than she did revising it during the months preceding the first training sessions. Local people could have helped her make it more relevant to local needs and practices.

Informality in Training Sessions. A consistent feature of the training experience was the effort to encourage trainee participation by avoiding formality in the conduct of classes. Some trainees were hesitant to speak up and to ask questions or express ideas, and negative feelings about formal class situations were common. In retrospect, Miss Matsen felt she should have included more opportunities for trainees to demonstrate that they had learned the skill being taught, even though it would have meant covering fewer topics.

An informal touch was often added by including the trainees' families, especially children, and even the general community in some project activities, such as a children's party at Easter or Christmas or a family outing to the beach.

Following the Wave I graduation ceremony, a buffet supper, planned and prepared by the family assistants, was served to approximately 130 friends, relatives, and other guests. After the meal, dance music was provided by a local band.

SENSITIVITY TRAINING

One of the training innovations not anticipated in the original course planning was the incorporation of sensitivity training sessions from time to time.

The sensitivity training served a variety of functions. It helped people to understand their co-workers, their own attitudes, and their roles. It also provided a human relations perspective to help family assistants in recruiting and serving families.

A consultant to several agencies in the area was brought in toward the end of the first course for discussion of roles and relationships which were troubling the family assistants. In the second and third waves this need was anticipated and the discussion was held earlier in the course. Outside consultants were used again. In the fourth wave, the group worker led similar discussions. This kind of training was very popular in New York City at the time and apparently was an acceptable alternative to more conventional human relations training. Sensitivity training will be discussed more fully in the section on in-service training. This general area of human relations, along with the preparation for direct work with families, were the aspects of the program that the director for training felt least well equipped to handle by herself.

EVALUATION OF TRAINING

The research staff attempted several different approaches to training program evaluation. The intent was to make revisions in training content and method based on trainee-trainer feedback.

The first approach was to try to develop a traditional before-and-after testing program to see if the program content had been mastered. This testing was never actually carried out.

The director for training subscribed to the before-and-after testing idea in principle. In practice, she found it was not feasible because the content to be covered each week was never fixed firmly enough to guarantee that test items would be relevant. She felt such testing would not be meaningful in light of the flexible discussion format and because of guest speakers whose presentations were not precisely defined in advance.

She found sample questions drawn from other projects unsuitable. She was not teaching content that permitted tests using absolute true and false answers to questions. She did indicate later in the project that knowing more about the trainees' beginning level of skill and knowledge would have helped her plan the teaching at a more appropriate level. Several visiting speakers mentioned the wide range in the previous preparation of class members they talked to. This was compounded by the fact that many of the family assistants were not really very proficient in English. At times speakers could not tell whether they were being understood or not.

The second evaluation method tried was participant observation. Staff members observed sessions and trainees were asked to report content preferences and reactions on standard forms prepared by the research staff. Waves II and III completed these forms. They indicated some preference among topics. The reports were reviewed by on-site staff, but were not received in Ithaca and analyzed in time to make any particular contribution to the fourth training course. This method had a number of deficiencies. The staff decided to rotate responsibility for making observations instead of having one consistent observer. As no special training was provided for the observers, reliability of reporting was limited. The trainees could not consistently make the choices that were requested in the forms prepared for their use and the contribution of this procedure was negligible. The staff members did fill out the forms fairly regularly and the assistant director in charge of teaching made very thoughtful comments. Possibly the major benefit of the work with the forms was prompting discussion and reflection.

To supplement the more objective approaches, an attempt was made to get participants' subjective feedback. The family assistants wrote brief evaluations of the entire training course immediately after completing it. Responding to open-ended questions, the family assistants tended to focus on their reactions to the program goals, the experience of being employed as a family assistant, and other personally significant topics. These essays contained both very complimentary notes and some fairly negative comments. Only a fraction of the comments dealt with the course content.

The family assistants' reports on their family visits provided an indirect and probably incomplete indicator of the nature and extent of their use of course material. They mentioned helping families to measure windows for curtains and then helping them make the curtains. This activity offered an opportunity for consumer education, including shopping trips and related budgeting. Many families began to use surplus foods for the first time due to the encouragement of the family assistants. Requests for recipes using surplus food items became frequent and were considered signs of interest. When the food stamp program replaced the distribution of surplus foods in 1970, family assistants explained the use of food stamps to many families.

Miss Matsen commented in a February, 1971 interview that she found the best indicator of the success of a teaching method was the reaction of the class. From this standpoint she considered the first wave the most successful as it was most lively and responsive. In general, she found that trainees who were already quite proficient benefitted most from instruction.

There was no way of determining whether the information given the family assistants was transmitted accurately to families. Miss Matsen believed it was unlikely that all family assistants were teaching skills covered in training because some of them did not have the skills themselves. She felt there were great individual differences in mastery of the course content. These differences could have been attributed to differences in initial skill, knowledge or interest, to the level of presentation of course material, to differences in ability to understand instruction in English, or to the level of general interest and proficiency in working with new ideas.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

In lieu of any sustained formal evaluation, at the close of the project informal reactions from the major participants were solicited. At this point the participants could look at the training having worked with families and having the perspective provided by the passage of time.

Miss Matsen played a critical role in preparing this first-hand feedback. She wrote a brief report giving her own observations as trainer and also arranged a meeting of eight family assistants to discuss and evaluate the training as they saw it.

The major ideas in these reports are presented below. Miss Matsen focuses on how she would like to approach overall program planning if she had a chance to start over again, while the family assistants note specifics as well as general points.

The leadership training referred to was given during the last six months of the project and is described as part of in-service training.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR TRAINING

- Start with community leadership training sessions. Content could be worked in two days a week or preferably, after leadership classes were over. This way, the sense of purpose and understanding of what individuals, groups, and the project were about would be developed prior to content training.
- Develop content structure and discussions around family life cycle and relate things back to it--as food for young family, for middle family, for senior citizens, etc.
- Cut down on number of topics and amount of information covered.
- Work more with skills--comparison shopping, food preparation, sewing (clothing and furnishings), furniture refinishing, wall decorations, storage units, toys and activities for children. Use more "teach-backs," or student demonstrations until the teacher knows that skill is "mastered."
- Spend more discussion time on money management--credit, ways to evaluate needs and wants, developing goals for family and individual, etc.
- Build in much more of content training to be done by "graduate" family assistants.
- Make more of own teaching materials (written, slides, etc.) and encourage trainees and family assistants to help. (Maybe make more "how to do it" booklets as in slide program leader guides.)

- Tape classes to use for personal and teach-back evaluation purposes.
- Assign more homework and preplanning functions to trainees.
- Start workshops for community earlier and allow family assistants to be teachers and/or continue working individually with families. We tried too hard to put everyone in one mold because we didn't know how to work it out otherwise.

EVALUATION BY FAMILY ASSISTANTS

- Leaflets useful--many said they still refer back to them.
- Ideally would include all subjects and spend at least two weeks on each.
- Need to be better prepared when first go out.
- Suggested include buying clothing items and appliances in training.
- During training we worked on so many different things--kept getting off the track. It was disorganized and many lost interest.
- Suggested everyone take general training course; then if she wants to, could become a specialist in some area with additional training. We talked a bit about this in terms of working with families and gaining their confidence. Suggested family assistant "generalists" could call upon family assistant "specialists" to help them with a problem or could work with family together. Didn't discuss what if everyone wanted to be only a "specialist."
- There was not enough communication between family assistants once out working; no way to pass along to others the things individuals learned in terms of resources, techniques, etc. (This was original purpose of in-service sessions but group workers were unable to work with it--other things more important.)
- One person mentioned you really have to feel dedicated to what you're doing in order to be effective.
- All who had leadership training agreed that should have been first. Then there wouldn't be the floundering around and worrying about making family contacts, working in the community, their role, etc. Program could go directly into content from leadership training if it is to be a consumer education program.
- Should provide each family with a notebook "of leaflets and information."
- Suggested outline if family assistants only had eight weeks training focused on consumer education:

  Family Financial Management - 3 weeks (first)

  Food - 2 weeks

  Family Health - 1 week

  Home Furnishings - 2 weeks (ideally 3 weeks, last)

A FAMILY ASSISTANT PINPOINTS NEEDED EMPHASIS

One final evaluative comment written by a family assistant pinpoints the need for the consumer information in the community and emphasizes the potential for helping people, but suggests more intensive content training.

> I think that much more time should have been spent on the type of training we needed. We should have had much more training on budgeting--which is a very tough job even if you are doing it for yourself. And also how to get the people get the confidence of people--to work on it. It is very hard working with people dealing with their money. I think we should have had some kind of training in that area.
>
> I think that on almost every point we should have spent more time, maybe not so much with cleaning and dealing with things like that because most people know how to do those kinds of jobs. But decorating, helping them pick out furniture and things like this--teaching them how to go about buying furniture is needed. You should have spent a lot more time on this because you go around the neighborhood and find that a lot of people have been taken because they actually do not know what is a good piece of furniture and what is not.

In-Service Training

RATIONALE AND FUNCTION

After the training of the first group of family assistants was completed in May, 1969, the staff decided that two afternoons of the 20-hour workweek would be devoted to "in-service training." There were several reasons for this decision. At first the family assistants did not have enough families to work with 20 hours a week. The major reason was that they felt the need for additional information and training in order to work with families. Initially, in-service sessions dealt primarily with difficulties the family assistants ran into working with families, problems families faced and what to do about them, and filling out forms.

The focus of the in-service sessions changed, however, beginning in October, 1969. At this time a 10-week sewing workshop was held for the first two groups of family assistants while Wave III was in pre-service training. The major objective of the workshop was to increase their skills in special areas. More workshops followed including a Red Cross course.

In the fall of 1970 three workshops were organized which took the form of classes open to the community. The purpose of these classes in sewing, food and nutrition, and interior decoration was to give the family assistants an opportunity to develop their competence in putting on demonstrations as well as to increase their own skill in these areas. (See section on "Work with Groups" for discussion of this activity.)

The last formally organized in-service sessions from January, 1971 to May, 1971 were devoted to community leadership training for the family assistants. The purpose of this series of meetings was to enable the family assistants to become more effective in working within the community and in solving community problems. As work with families ended, many field trips were arranged to increase family assistants' knowledge of resources.

According to the assistant project director, changes in the purpose and content of the in-service training were frequent due to opportunities available and group workers' preferences or interpretation of needs.

> We continually were trying new combinations of things--never fully realizing the potential of any (workshops for improving own skills, demonstrations, community classes, personal care--home nursing skills, etc.) . . . it was undoubtedly very confusing to the family assistants; it certainly was for key staff. We'd just get into a certain scheduling pattern, then it would change.

Throughout the project in-service training was primarily the responsibility of group workers, sometimes planning only for his own group and sometimes planning special sessions of interest to all groups. Ideas usually were brought up in staff meetings and if approved, the group worker made the detailed plans. The assistant director for training helped, but during the first year was too busy with pre-service teaching and all the related administrative tasks to take any other major responsibility.

In-service training also was used for some of the community service and social action projects described elsewhere in this report.

CHRONOLOGY

The first group of family assistants in the Cornell-OEO Project completed their eight weeks of pre-service training late in May, 1969, and immediately began working 20 hours per week. Two half days per week were set aside for in-service training and the other half days were reserved for helping families. Each successive group followed the same schedule. In March, 1970, a different pattern was introduced with one meeting each week for the whole group and one individual or team conference meeting with the group worker.

During the first few months of in-service training, time was used for discussion of administrative matters, plans for trips and special events, and discussions of problems arising in the family assistants' day to day work. Other topics included the possibility of social action to alleviate community problems, talks by staff and visiting specialists on subjects on which the staff or the family assistants thought more information was needed. During this period both the key staff (director, assistant director, research associate, and group workers) and the family assistants were new and had a lot to learn about city resources as well as methods of working with families. At the same time in-service meetings served to reinforce the group identity developed during training and to mold attitudes and patterns of service. No formal routine for supervision, other than these general meetings was established.

From August to October, 1969 about half the in-service sessions dealt with home economics information, the other half with resources, community problems, planning future work, problem cases, community agency policy, and teaching methods. The traditional home economics topics taken up were a demonstration of the care of electric mixer and skillet; a field trip to the Brooklyn Union Gas Company for a demonstration of the care and use of large gas appliances;[1] a price survey of small electrical appliances; a whole series on fibers, clothing construction, fitting of shoes, and foot and skin care; and a session on the intellectual stimulation of toddlers. The other topics included discussions of landlords' and tenants' rights, the services available at the Red Hook-Gowanus Health Center, and recent information on medicaid. Drug abuse and agencies to help drug users were also considered. Several of the discussions were carried on both in terms of the family assistants' problems in relation to their own children and in terms of their role as members of the project in helping other families in the community. This was particularly true of the drug and health department discussions.

In-service training sessions through the middle of October, 1969 dealt specifically with the individual and community problems family assistants were encountering. At that point the focus of the sessions was changed. In-service time was then devoted to a sewing workshop which lasted through January, 1970. Arrangements were made to use some of the community space in the basement of Gowanus Houses. One room, equipped with sewing machines rented or borrowed from the College of Human Ecology, was kept open every day. Another room was used for baby-sitting. A Cornell staff member taught three sessions at weekly intervals. Although attendance was not uniform, the workshop was thought to have improved the morale of the family assistants. It did provide a setting in which family assistants from Waves I and II could work together for the first time. Perhaps the most important aspect of the workshop, however, was that the family assistants learned how to operate sewing machines and became convinced they could save money and be well dressed by sewing for themselves and their children. Most of them owned sewing machines which they had bought from door-to-door salesmen. The sewing workshop culminated in a style show open to the community at the end of January.

The third group of trainees were in pre-service training in October and November, 1969. They later used six to eight sessions of their in-service time for a sewing workshop.

Beginning in January some in-service time was used for discussion of relationships among project members. Members of the third group of trainees felt the first group had not welcomed them and had tried to keep them in a subordinate role.

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[1] The staff learned that many of the Spanish-speaking families in the area did not know how to light gas ovens and therefore did not use them.

By the middle of March, 1970 the decision was made to have separate in-service meetings for the different groups of family assistants. This was partly in response to differences in experience and partly because the size of the group made it hard to find meeting space of adequate size. The pattern of in-service training was also changed, so that one session a week was reserved for individual conferences between group workers and family assistants. In this way the group workers could keep informed of the work being done with families and help family assistants in planning their work and in completing records and reports. General staff meetings at the beginning of each month were instituted to bring everyone together, keep people informed, and maintain group cohesion.

In the spring of 1970 the in-service training for Waves I, II, and III consisted of two workshops. One was a 24-hour course in homemaker-home health care given by Red Cross personnel at the Red Cross headquarters in downtown Brooklyn. Twenty-six family assistants completed all the sessions and received certificates. Ten of the family assistants were thought by the Red Cross to be suitable for more training for future employment as home health aides and had follow-up sessions to explore career possibilities.

During the same weeks a furniture refinishing workshop was held at Colony House. The home economist from the New York City Housing Authority instructed at some sessions, demonstrating techniques and helping family assistants with work on the pieces they had brought in from their apartments or bought secondhand.

PHASE-OUT TRAINING

During the last months of the project work with families was gradually terminated and the in-service training portion of the family assistants' work increased in importance. From the end of January, 1971 to the middle of May, most of the family assistants spent ten hours a week in community leadership training classes.

The family assistants were divided into two groups with a trainer for each group. One of the trainers, Les Wright, was a group worker and the other an experienced group leader. The training was designed to make the family assistants more effective members of the community, but it also included some job-related skills such as developing personal resumes and filling out forms. The official goals of the training for the family assistants were:

1) to become a more effective community member by developing a sense of responsibility to self and to the community; developing problem-solving skills; developing maximum individual potential;
2) to learn to better perceive self and the way she functions as an individual in a group;
3) to understand the complexities of group functioning and to learn how to be a more positive contributor to a group;
4) to learn ways to help groups to which she belongs accomplish what they want to accomplish;

5) to acquire some skills which better prepare her for competition in the job market.

A course manual entitled Community Organization Training was prepared by the two trainers. In it they pictured the family assistants' role as primarily that of block worker with little reference to home management or consumer education. The classes dwindled in size as family assistants left for other jobs and by the end had been merged into one group.

The sessions began with an explanation of group dynamics. The trainers considered with their classes the characteristics of a productive group and the interactions that exist within groups. Later sessions dealt with different kinds of leaders, the efficacy of group action versus individual action, and the mechanics of meetings. Particular ways of involving people in the community were discussed. The trainers stressed the need to take responsibility. They gave considerable attention to the process of problem solving. They repeatedly worked through defining the problem, evolving alternatives, and deciding on a plan.

After the first few sessions one trainer reported that he saw evidence of the effectiveness of the training in the behavior of family assistants with whom he attended community meetings. He felt the women were more apt to stick to the purpose of the meeting and not become emotional or upset when they disagreed with what was being said. Some class assignments involved going to meetings while others required talking to the residents of the family assistant's block and writing reports on books about urban communities.

In the beginning, some family assistants were skeptical of the training, but after a few sessions, most viewed it positively. Several left before it was completed to take jobs in other programs. With the remainder, the trainers ran up against several problems. Some of the material was more difficult for the class than they had realized and took longer to explain. This was particularly true in the case of the Spanish-speaking family assistants. A bilingual woman in the afternoon group was relied upon by the others to explain what was going on, either in brief exchanges during the class or longer ones afterward, but this arrangement was only partially satisfactory. Several family assistants had time conflicts or felt the language problem was insuperable and so were assigned to assist the research associate with a housing survey, straightening out the files, and did other clerical tasks to assist in closing out the project.

CHOICE OF IN-SERVICE TOPICS

The in-service training content most often developed from interests or needs expressed by family assistants and group workers and was adapted to fit the time, space, and resources available. Questionnaire data collected in the summer of 1969 showed that in-service topics were about equally divided between family assistants' requests and topics on which the staff felt the family assistants needed help.

Topics or specific information which the family assistants asked for in 1969 included opportunities for advancing education; training in first aid and home nursing; demonstration on use of donated commodities; methods for presenting demonstrations to groups; clothing care and construction; changes in welfare; sensitivity training; a trip to the Brooklyn Union Gas Company; demonstration of electrical appliances; cosmetics and skin and foot care; price surveys of toys, clothing and appliances; community health facilities; sewing workshop for family assistants and homemakers; fashion show of low-cost attire; more money management; problems of adolescents; and how to help families solve their problems.

At the same time the staff listed separately topics they felt the family assistants needed. These included sensitivity training; money management; more information on how to deal with reluctant teenagers; ways and means of reaching teenagers effectively; furniture buying; field trip to federation of cooperatives; buying clothing, toys, and large and small appliances; changes in welfare allowances; and clothing care and construction.

Most of the suggested topics were covered one way or another during the project.

SENSITIVITY TRAINING SESSIONS

Sensitivity training was incorporated in pre-service training to fill the need for help with interpersonal relations. The staff and trainees found the sessions helpful and therefore made sensitivity training a part of in-service training as well from time to time.

In general, these sessions aimed at making project members more aware of their relationships with other people and enabling them to handle these relationships more effectively. Some focused on the family assistant's perception of her role. The sessions helped with internal project relationships and the ways in which family assistants dealt with families while out on the job.

Two different sensitivity trainers handled the in-service sessions. The first time a trainer came the assistant director for training and the group workers were included in the group. He encouraged discussion of personal strengths and weaknesses and feelings toward other project members. He asked the family assistants why they were involved in the program and what they expected from it. Other topics were how they could best relate to the community and how to handle drug addicts. He also worked with the family assistants to define their role realistically and to give them methods for being effective with people.

Later sessions conducted by a different trainer excluded key staff members, but considered some of the same topics in project context. The trainer was reported to have asked the family assistants to do some soul-searching. He asked them if they could really do what they were saying they wanted to do. The family assistants expressed doubts and feelings that they could not deal with, and as a result, some began to feel very negative about sensitivity sessions. Some sensitivity sessions were originally planned as part of the community leadership training, but the plans were dropped when the trainers found that the family assistants were skeptical and felt they had had bad experiences with sensitivity training.

The project director believed that some family assistants found the sensitivity sessions very helpful because they would ask for them when they had problems and project morale was low. The beneficial effect would last for two or three months. The key staff can report little about what actually happened in these sessions. The second trainer was very explicit about the key staff not being present. He wanted family assistants to speak freely without fear that what they said would be heard by their supervisors. The topics with which the sessions dealt were common knowledge but individual experiences were confidential.

During this period the label "sensitivity training" was being used loosely to refer to many group experiences. The director found the trainers he employed through other administrators who had used them successfully. The trainers were men who had worked in other programs, in industry especially with middle management personnel who were having trouble relating to newly employed minority group members. The director had participated in a variety of sensitivity sessions himself and knew the pitfalls as well as the merits of sensitivity training.

INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

One of the original purposes of the in-service sessions was to provide an opportunity for guidance of the family assistants' work with families. Until March, 1970 however, in-service sessions were group meetings. Then regular individual conferences between group workers and the family assistants were scheduled for the purpose of helping the family assistants become more productive in working with families and filling out forms relating to them.

Effective family assistant supervision remained an unsolved problem in the project. Each group worker guided his group quite differently. This was due to varying capabilities and also to different interpretations of the project and their role within it. The group workers' supervisory role included responsibility in helping the family assistants develop their skill in working with families. They also were responsible for helping a family assistant plan and assess work with families to decide on the best course of action.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

Toward the end of the project the assistant director for training made several recommendations for future projects.

1) Before project starts, we should work out a plan for the development of in-service training. We should do more to orient and provide the group workers with training and in understanding the scope of their own roles and responsibility, particularly as supervisors in a community-oriented program.
2) Plan for orderly development as more training classes are involved.
3) Start field visits and supervision immediately after "graduation."

4) After the first three months (after initial training) in-service should be reduced to one day a week.

5) Individual conferences should be held outside in-service time using one hour a week out of time family assistants work with families.

6) Group in-service could be better done with a committee of family assistants and group workers to plan and carry out program.

7) A sizable amount of time should be spent during training and in-service in "developing" family assistants' skills as teachers and expeditors.

VI. FAMILIES SERVED

The six major types of services that the family assistants provided in their one-to-one work with families have been described in Chapter IV. In this chapter characteristics of the families served are described in relation to their responsiveness to the project services. In addition, this chapter includes reports on substudies of selected families undertaken to clarify the use of project services and deviations from expected patterns of service.

This discussion of families and the kinds of service to which they responded is based on the research staff's analysis of over 5,000 visit reports made by family assistants, summaries prepared by group workers, and guided interviews with key staff and family assistants. The family, problem service data as well as several substudies appear in more detail in Supplement No. 2, Families Served by the Cornell-OEO Project.

It was expected that some service on problems other than home management would be needed as an entree for the family assistant. The family's immediate pressing problems would have to be controlled to some extent for an educational program to be of any interest. However, no one predicted that the major focus of the project work during the first year would be helping families make use of available community resources, a service called expediting, or that it would require a major effort to shift the focus to teaching in the second year. The operating definition of project effectiveness was in terms of the number of people reached and the proportion of visits in which teaching activities occurred. It was not possible to get concrete evidence on the amount learned by families served.

Family Characteristics Determining Response To Teaching

The family information sheets and visit reports provided demographic data and information about topics and problems discussed and services rendered. Several classification systems for use in content analysis were developed using this data.

The family's stage in the life cycle and its problem load were the two most productive characteristics for understanding families' differential service needs and their reaction to the teaching. A third, but less critical characteristic, was lack of proficiency in English. Other factors possibly influencing the amount of teaching were individual differences in family assistants' interest and skill in teaching, their concept of their role, and the emphasis on teaching or other service during their training.

FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

The families were classified according to an eight stage life cycle code as shown in Table I. Families at each life cycle stage had a characteristic pattern of interests, needs, and problems to which family assistants were able to respond with a rather consistent pattern of service.

The groups most receptive to teaching of home management subject matter were the young families and those with both preschool and grade school-aged children. More than 39 percent of the families served fell into these two life cycle stages. In contrast, the elderly, who made up 19 percent of the families served, showed very little interest in the educational content of the program. Family assistants found them preoccupied with needs related to their physical condition, financial limitations, and isolation. Elderly families were studied to provide the basis for policy decisions concerning future service to that group. Examples of their situations and services by family assistants are given on pages 77 and 78.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Families
According to Stage in Family Life Cycle

Family Life Cycle	Families Number	Families Percent
Single young adults	14	3
Very young families	63	14
Families with children in grade school	109	25
Families with both young children and teenagers	75	17
Mature or middle-aged parents with teenage children still at home	56	13
Grandparents bringing up young children	7	2
Adult families (no children at home)	30	7
Elderly families	86	19
Total	440	100
Not enough information to classify	27	

PROBLEM CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

The data from visit reports and the group workers' summaries also were used to develop a code for both the home management topics and other problem areas discussed. The number of problem areas not closely related to home management was used as the basis for a three level problem-load typology.

Home Management Topics

The home management topics discussed sometimes represented problem areas for a specific family, but usually they were topics on which the family assistant offered information to the family. A list of eight major home management topics was used for the final analysis. A family assistant who saw a family several times and was doing any teaching was likely to touch on most of these topics at least once.

Table 2 shows the order of the eight home management topics according to the percentage of families whose records indicate at least one mention of the topic.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Topics Related to Home Management for 345 Families Visited More Than Once

Home Management Topics	Number	Percent
Care of apartment	249	72
Shopping	238	69
Food and nutrition	233	68
Sewing	179	52
Child care	179	52
Money management	159	46
Clothing	155	45
Surplus foods	127	37

Most of the teaching reported centered around these topics. Shopping, care of the apartment, and child care were frequently identified in connection with personal service as well as teaching. Concern about clothing might provide an occasion for teaching comparison shopping or for taking used clothing to a family. Use of surplus foods was often a teaching topic, but when the discussion turned to eligibility and procedure for getting these foods, expediting was the classification assigned. These figures may be underestimates since topics were often mentioned with no indication of whether teaching had occured or not.

The family assistant usually initiated discussion of relevant home management topics with each family as she described the program and the services she could offer. With some families one or more topics were of special interest and were taken up in subsequent visits. With others, after the program description, the discussion quickly turned to other problem areas of more concern to the family.

Repeated references in visit records to the home management topics were interpreted as responsiveness to teaching. The rationale assumed that the family assistant might initiate discussion of these topics to stimulate interest, but would not continue unless there was some response.

Problem Areas Not Related to Home Management

Frequency of problem areas. Nine frequently mentioned problem areas outside the home management field were also identified. Analysis of the records provided frequency data on these problems. However, data were inadequate to determine problem intensity, severity, or chronicity. A problem area was counted as pertinent if it was mentioned even once for a given family. Only one tally for that problem was registered no matter how many more times that problem appeared in the records of a particular family. The frequency and percentage distribution of problem areas are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Problems Not Related to Home Management for 345 Families Visited More Than Once

Non-Home Management Topics	Number	Percent
Health	255	74
Welfare	198	57
Personal or confidential	168	49
Housing	151	44
Employment	111	32
Legal and consumer fraud	82	24
School	81	23
Language	78	22
Neighborhood	64	18
Isolation or loneliness	53	15

Definitions of problems. In the coding system developed for this study "problem" was used with a special meaning. It was limited to circumstances or conditions which differed from an individual's normal expectations or way of life. Demographic characteristics, such as age or minority group status that are often spoken of as problems were the normal condition of life among the population contacted. The purpose of the typology was to differentiate between degrees of hardship within a population already identified as living with the overall problems of low-income, minority group membership, and residence in a blighted urban area. Thus, dependency on public assistance was not counted as a problem.

The definition of a health problem ranged from a chronic disabling condition to a brief illness, but ordinarily would not be reported unless there were difficulties giving rise to discussion of resources or need for help. Health problems were almost universal, and the difficulty in obtaining care was responsible for much of the expediting activity by family assistants.

A housing problem sometimes meant something as routine as help in calling the exterminator, but usually it meant a serious situation like an eviction notice, an increase in rent, overcrowding, family tension requiring one or more members to seek separate quarters, or deplorable housing conditions.

The "personal or confidential" category included problems the family assistant preferred not to reveal, such as drug use by a family member, marital conflict, or parent-child friction. "Neighborhood problems" often meant the presence of drug addicts and robberies in the area or lack of child care facilities.

The tally of problems reported is undoubtedly conservative. In the early months of the project the community-wide problems such as housing and the dramatic problems like consumer fraud were spoken of often by family assistants but did not appear frequently in individual family records. Furthermore, many family assistants did not see any need to record an ongoing problem more than once. Sometimes it was not until a fifth or sixth visit that they mentioned language deficiency that must have been obvious from the first contact and may have been the reason for continuing the contact. Based on the data available it was decided to use any single mention on any visit report as a problem to be recorded for that family. A total count showing every time the problem was mentioned would be difficult to maintain accurately. A tally that does not take account of severity and chronicity is not entirely satisfactory, but the data did not permit an analysis of such detail.

DEVELOPMENT OF PROBLEM-LOAD TYPOLOGY

The problem analysis was used to compute the problem load for individual families. It should be stressed that the score or tally of problems for individuals was not based on an inventory or diagnostic interview but on problem areas recognized by family and family assistant and considered important enough to record on visit reports. The result was a three-way typology for classification of families by problem load as follows:

Type 1:	light problem load	0 - 2 problem areas
Type 2:	medium problem load	3 - 4 problem areas
Type 3:	heavy problem load	5 or more problem areas

Type 3 families appear to be quite similar to "multiproblem" families in some sociological and semipopular writing. The detailed personal data to document such a comparison were not available. However, "heavy problem load" and "multiproblem" are used interchangeably in this report.

A somewhat similar classification system was developed in a study in which 2081 Detroit families were interviewed and their problems inventoried in terms of their service needs. (15)

Classification of Families

Each family was assigned to one of the problem-load categories on the basis of the visit records. The assignments were checked by a staff member in Brooklyn who was familiar with the families and differences in judgement were reconciled by the research staff.

Persons with a language handicap were classified separately because the language barrier seemed to permeate and intensify problems in all areas. However, they could be divided into the three problem-load types within the language deficiency category, even though the impression sometimes conveyed in discussions was that all the Spanish-speaking families carried a heavy problem load.

Classification of 345 families according to their problem load is shown in Table 4. More than a third fell in the light load group and about half were in the medium load group. The finding that only 14 percent of the families were classified as Type 3 came as a surprise because from the beginning this group absorbed a large proportion of all visiting, reporting, and data analysis time. In some Type 3 cases each member of the family had a problem requiring a different kind of help. Later analysis showed that dependency on public assistance, having a female head of household, and residence in the area outside the housing projects were all associated with high problem load.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Families According to Problem Typology

	All Families					
	No language problem		Language problem*		Total	
Problem Typology	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
1. Light load	104	38	17	23	121	35
2. Medium load	132	48	43	60	175	51
3. Heavy load	37	14	12	17	49	14
Total	273	100	72	100	345	100
Not enough information to classify					122**	

*21 percent of all families were classified as having language problems.
**Almost all of these were visited only once or twice.

Relationship Between Problems and Services

Families with a light problem load (Type 1) in all age groups were most responsive to teaching efforts. This finding was consistently confirmed in several analyses at different stages of the project. As might be predicted, on the average the multiproblem families were visited more frequently and were visited over a longer period of time than others. They showed far more interest in personal service and expediting than in the teaching by family assistants. An occasional family assistant, who did a lot of teaching with all her families would find a way to include some teaching in a few contacts with multiproblem families also. Almost all of the family assistants in the first three waves had at least one multiproblem family during the project.

In May, 1970, the project director announced a shift in policy under which family assistants were to focus on the consumer education and home management aspects of the program and to de-emphasize personal service and expediting. Each group worker was responsible for reviewing his group's work with families and for advising continuation or termination of contact. The policy change coincided with efforts of a new group worker to persuade family assistants to discontinue work with families where no further progress in home management seemed likely, either because of the type of problem the family had or the limitations of the family assistant's skill as a counselor or teacher. For example, some families whose major concern was drugs were dropped at this time. Repetitious service like shopping for a family was discouraged. Few family assistants terminated these activities entirely, but they did not take on new families for this type of service.

One of the major changes resulting from the policy shift in May, 1970 was the de-emphasis of work with multiproblem families. No more were added to the service lists for long-term service after that date. Some of those already on the list were dropped, but most continued to receive service intermittently until the end of the project. Shifts in focus toward more teaching of home management were found in comparisons between families just seen before June, 1970 with those first contacted after that date.

Several studies confirm the return to the teaching activity and reduction in other forms of service.

Focus of Service During First Year

At the end of the first year of service, records of 268 families were analyzed to determine the major focus of the family assistant's role. In this analysis the definition of focus of service was "If one-half or more of the visits were in a specific category, the service was coded primarily in that category." Expediting was the focus for 68 percent (181 out of 268); teaching for 34 percent (92); moral support for 13 percent. Subsequent definitions were in terms of percent of visits devoted to a service or equal to or more than other service.

Interviews with a sample of family assistants at about the same time showed that expediting, in addition to being the most frequent service, was the most highly valued service in the eyes of both the family assistant and families. (19) At that time the families who had been getting the most attention were the families later classified as Type 3 problem load and the elderly, regardless of problem load type.

It can be assumed that a high proportion of these families were Type 3. Further evidence was provided by studies of elderly families and families receiving service for longer than six months.

FOCUS OF SERVICES TO ELDERLY

When work with 79 elderly was reviewed in December, 1970 it was found to consist of personal service and the three categories of expediting much more than teaching. Teaching was reported at least once for 44 percent of these families, but in only 16 percent of all visits.

The problem areas most frequently mentioned in connection with elderly families were poor health (84 percent); welfare, social security or medicaid (58 percent); isolation and loneliness (44 percent); and housing (43 percent).

Fifty-eight percent of 81 elderly persons who were classified by problem load fell in the middle group. The remaining 42 percent were divided evenly with 21 percent each in the light and heavy problem load groups. In contrast, 40 percent of the nonelderly families were Type 1, 48 percent Type 2, and only 12 percent were Type 3. (See Supplementary Report No. 2, Services to Families, Section III, p. 18, Table 9).

Examples of work with elderly families are included with the substudy report later in this section. They were chosen to illustrate both the different circumstances that permitted or prevented teaching, and the approach of one family assistant who was able to carry on a teaching relationship after building confidence.

FOCUS OF WORK WITH FAMILIES RECEIVING PROLONGED SERVICE

After all visiting of families had ended, an investigation of work with 122 nonelderly families who were visited for longer than six months confirmed the relationship between problem load and type of service. Families of all types were included in this analysis, though the majority were of Type 2. "Major service" was defined as "a service mentioned more often than or at least as often as any other kind of service." By this definition teaching was a major service for 85 percent of the Type 1 families, 78 percent of the Type 2 families and 57 percent of the Type 3 families. Expediting was a major service for only six percent in Type 1 families, but rose to 22 percent in Type 2 and 52 percent in Type 3. Moral support, which frequently meant informal counseling and discussion of problems without a specific service, was reported as a major service for six percent in Type 1, six percent in Type 2 and 43 percent in Type 3 families.

The contrast between Type 1 and Type 3 families is even sharper when the percent of visits devoted to teaching is determined. A handful of families who had been visited for 13 months or longer were analyzed in detail. Interest in home management topics and teaching was sustained throughout these extended contacts with almost all the Type 1 families. In contrast, interest in home management topics was almost never reported for the Type 3 families. The family assistants typically helped the multiproblem families with the problems both parties regarded as most urgent. The family assistants did the best they could recognizing that they could not do much except expediting with these families.

SAMPLE OF 75 CASES

To illustrate the variety of situations in which family assistants found the families with whom they worked and to give examples of the kinds of services that seemed appropriate, a sample of 75 families was selected. The sample was made up of 25 families of each problem load type. The sample included families for whom considerable information was available; so the sample was not representative of the total population served by the project nor was it typical of the population of the area. An attempt was made to include examples from each ethnic group, residential area, stage of the life cycle, and when possible, for each family assistant. The average period of working with the sample families was longer than for all families served by the project.

The sample families provided additional evidence of the relationship between problem load and type of activity in which the family assistants were able to interest the family. Percent of teaching was calculated by dividing the number of visits in which teaching was mentioned by the total number of visits. The average amount of teaching based on this computation was 57 percent for the low-problem families and only 19 percent for the Type 3 multi-problem families.

Teaching was a major service for 68 percent of the Type I families in the sample and for eight percent of the Type 3 families. The difference is less when the less precise definition of teaching (mentioned at least once while affiliated with the project) is used.

The following synopses illustrate some of the more commonly encountered problems and services. Family identity has been disguised. In a few cases quotations from the family assistants' reports are included. See Supplementary Report No. 2, Families Served by the Cornell-OEO Project for additional synopses and analysis of services.

EXAMPLES OF WORK WITH TYPE I FAMILIES

Cuban family with one baby, living in the area, father employed, receiving some public assistance. There wasn't enough money to fix the house and she needed help with preparing nutritious food and with home management. Mother was ill and needed an operation. Family assistant baby-sat so the mother could go to the clinic. Eight months, nine visits.

Puerto Rican family with language handicap, living in public housing, three preschool children, father employed. Family assistant helped with homemaking information--budgeting, interior decoration, etc. and interpreting. Fifteen months, 39 visits.

Puerto Rican family with five children, living in the area, husband employed. The major service was referring to the Department of Consumer Affairs about a problem with a television set and complaint about the TV repair man. There was one attempt at teaching after May 15. Ten months, 12 visits.

Black family with six children, living in housing project, husband employed. Eighteen visits over a period of seven months--mostly teaching budgeting and sewing.

> "Mrs. F. thinks we have helped her a lot with budgeting and comparison shopping and also feels that she has been able to save money with clothing and making of curtains. She is learning better food management and clothes buying. She seems to be very interested and very happy about our help."

Large, black family, living in housing project, eight children and grandchildren, father employed. The apartment was overcrowded and the family assistant helped file housing application and find separate apartment for the daughter and grandchildren. Family assistant also helped with storage and money management and decorating. Homemaker said she learned a lot and is getting more for her money with the food stamps. Nine months, 25 visits.

EXAMPLES OF WORK WITH TYPE 2 FAMILIES

Puerto Rican mother living in area with two preschool children, receiving welfare assistance. Family needed housing and furniture and the family assistant found apartment for them and helped mother get furniture. Mother also needed housekeeper while she was in the hospital having a baby. She wanted to learn about shopping and sewing and especially needed nutrition information. Visits continued for more than a year (41 visits) and teaching was a major service throughout.

Black mother with six children, receiving welfare assistance, living in housing project with grandmother and father. Family assistant helped the family with funeral arrangements for the grandfather. They needed moral support and help with home management. On the eighth visit, family assistant reported that "she has done wonderful in home and children." Fourteen months, 30 visits.

> "When association began, homemaker was very untidy and seemingly lacked interest in her home and children. She felt handicapped by very little money in the budget. Family assistants helped homemaker find money-saving ideas for decorating and clothing plus tips on dealing with her children. Homemaker has painted and redecorated her apartment, rearranging her furniture to allow more space; homemaker is very pleased and surprised that she was able to do some of the things she previously considered impossible. Her attitude is now much more positive and optimistic."

Family living in the area, recently arrived from Puerto Rico, in search of a better life. "They couldn't find it." Two teenagers, father employed but later lost job due to head injury. Mother didn't understand English and couldn't read or write. She needed help with shopping and learning about subways. Family assistant helped them find a bigger apartment, and the wife got a job later. This is a good example of a family where expediting was the only service mentioned until the change in policy (24 visits) and then family assistant did do quite a bit of teaching--comparison shopping, cooking, and household management. Eighteen months, 51 visits.

> "She has become a bit more confident--learning to use subways and shop in supermarkets, and to go to welfare and clinic alone. She has progressed. She makes use

> of food recipes, asks more questions, and seems more willing to seek assistance in anything that she needs from me. She trusts me enough to call me on the phone and she does not hesitate to confide in me. She has voiced gratefulness for my assistance. With my help she keeps a neater apartment and at least does not have to worry about that. She is more food-purchase conscious and adheres to doctor's appointments."

EXAMPLES OF WORK WITH TYPE 3 FAMILIES

A very young black mother with three preschool children, living in housing project, father away in the service. Received welfare assistance along with allotment from her husband. She felt unable to cope with her many problems and was very depressed and discouraged. Family assistants were a source of moral support for her and referred her to a Trouble Shooting Clinic for group therapy, and to Planned Parenthood. They were able to help her in organizing her household and in teaching other homemaking skills. Mother felt family assistants helped her a lot and was sad when service had to be discontinued because she moved out of the project area--to another housing project. Seven months, 16 visits.

Large Puerto Rican family with eight children, living in the area, receiving welfare assistance, father not employed, didn't speak English. Housing conditions were very bad--rats, etc. Family was given a dispossess but eventually signed a lease on the same apartment and rent was raised. Family assistant's efforts to help this family consisted entirely of trying to alleviate the housing situation but she found it impossible to find housing for such a large family. Ten months, 27 visits.

Black mother living in housing project, receiving welfare assistance, bringing up six children alone. She needed clothing for the children and furniture, and the family assistants helped obtain this through the Salvation Army and St. Vincent de Paul. She needed lots of moral support and family assistants were able to provide this as well as teach a great deal about household management and care of the children. Visits were discontinued when family assistants felt much progress had been made. A family assistant made comment that as far as she was concerned, the success with this homemaker was sufficient to call the project a success. Sixteen months, 37 visits.

> "Homemaker has made progress and she would be the first to admit this. Since we started to work with her she has joined the neighborhood church, she has also joined the choir and the children are in Sunday School. She was having marriage problems when we started working with her. She needed moral support and we really feel that we were able to improve her condition. She joined

the church and we got clothing for the entire family along with furnishings."

SERVICE DIFFERENCES AMONG FAMILY ASSISTANTS

To a great extent family characteristics and family situation determined whether teaching was appropriate. Differences among family assistants should not be overlooked in trying to understand service patterns. Types of service performed varied greatly from one family assistant to another. Factors contributing to the variety included: the choice of family, the mutual decision to continue the relationship, the perception of the family's problems, and the ability to see ways to apply the family assistant's skills and knowledge. The tremendous difference in family needs made it inappropriate to compare family assistants' performance without also considering the kinds of families they were seeing. Variations in ability or willingness to report the type of service carried out also introduced differences in reports.

For many reasons some family assistants consistently found some basis for teaching with most of their families, or they selected families interested in what they had to teach, while others did not. During the first year when all family assistants valued expediting highly, the proportion of families for whom teaching was a major service varied considerably. Some of the family assistants were not teaching any of the families they were serving. Others reported teaching for as high as 93 percent of their family load. The average percentage of families for whom teaching was the major service was 39 percent.

During the second year the average proportion of families whose major focus was teaching came to 53 percent, and the range extended from zero percent to 100 percent. Five family assistants reported teaching with 100 percent of their families. Predictably comparable figures for personal service, expediting, and moral support show a decline as teaching increased.

All family assistants except four trained in the last wave reported expediting for at least one family during the life of the project. The average percent of families for whom expediting service was being provided dropped from 65 percent the first year to 29 percent the second year. These figures reflect the policy of emphasizing consumer education and home management the second year. However, this shift was not in line with the family assistants' view of their most valuable service.

Moral support, a less precisely defined category of service, was used to report visits involving discussion of problems nobody could do anything about or just providing a sympathetic ear and indicating concern. Twelve percent the first year and 13 percent the second were the average percent figures for families.

The figures above are based on services that constituted a major part of the family assistant's work with families, not just services that were mentioned at least once. "Major" in this case means "mentioned as many times as or more than any other service classified" for that family. Most visit reports mentioned more than one topic and more than one type of activity.

Demographic and Quantitative Data About Families and Volume of Service

Note: All quantitative data are conservative. The completeness of data was influenced by the family assistants' attitude toward report writing and their skill. The family assistants varied in the extent to which they reported brief contacts or occasions when they relayed course content to personal acquaintances. The completeness of reports also varied, with the result that many classifications could be made for only part of the total number of families. No record was made of families who were approached but declined services.

DEMOGRAPHIC

Total Count

Reports were made for 467 families who were visited at least once.

Ethnic

The ethnic distribution is shown in the following table:

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Families
According to Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	All Families	
	No.	Percent
Puerto Rican	234	50
Other Spanish-speaking	32	7
Black	170	36
White	27	6
Other (Arab, Japanese)	4	1
Total	467	100

The high percentage of non-English-speaking homemakers among the families from Puerto Rico and Central and Latin American countries necessitated the recruiting of Spanish-speaking family assistants and influenced the character of service given.

The number of white families participating was expected to be larger. The 1970 census for New York City was not available at the time of this writing so it was not clear whether the white population of the area had declined sharply or whether they simply were not interested in the project.

The 27 participating white families included 15 elderly persons, and seven families with school aged children with whom contact continued for substantial periods of time. The remaining five were seen only once and indicated no interest in continuing the contact, and very little is known about them.

Residence

Just over half the families lived in private housing in the area surrounding the public housing projects. The remainder were almost equally divided between the two public housing projects. (See Appendix B, Map 4 for residences of families.)

Welfare Status

Fifty-four percent of the families were either partially or totally dependent on public assistance.

Head of Household and Employment Status

More than half (51 percent) of the households had male heads. Among male-headed households, 85 percent of the husbands were employed. In nine percent of these families the wife was also employed.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF FAMILIES REACHED

Statistical summaries of work load were prepared every three months.

Period of Initial Contact

The two peak periods for adding families to the project list were the first period, May-September, 1969, with 147; and the fourth, April-June, 1970, with 107. From July, 1970 through March, 1971 only 73 families were added, though work in group settings was increasing.

Fluctuation in Volume of Work

The highest total number of families visited was reached in April-June, 1970, when 229 different families were visited, and the lowest in the first and last periods. This data represents current service volume during those periods and are not cumulative figures of service volume from the beginning of the project. In each period, in addition to initial contacts, there were terminations of contact. Some were inactive and others were reopened.

Reason for Termination

For 200 families, reason for termination of contact was known. Most frequent was "project closing," accounting for 47 percent; "problem solved" was second, with 24 percent. Moving away, finding jobs, and death together made up 20 percent. "Lack of interest" and "service inappropriate" were rarely mentioned.

Number of Visits Per Family

Half of the families had five visits or less. Half had more than five. One-fourth were visited only once. Excluding one-visit families, the mean number of visits per family was 14.3, and the median 9.0. Fourteen families had more than 50 visits. The 115 one-visit families were the subject of a substudy.

Duration of Contact in Months

Contact was maintained with 30 percent of the families for one month or less; with 34 percent for two to six months and 36 percent for seven months or longer. A special substudy was done of the 168 families continuing for more than six months.

WORK LOAD

Before the project started it was expected that each family assistant would work with five families at a time, replacing them if no progress was made and normally finishing and moving on to other families at the end of six months. In this scheme each group of eight family assistants and their group worker would reach 40 families every six months as shown in Figure 4.

The total families contacted (467 in one-to-one work and 80 nonduplicating families who attended group sessions) is approximately the number that four groups working for two years would have reached if the original plan had been followed. The pattern of service and time spent with families varied from family to family and differed from the original guidelines for service visits.

Statistical Picture of Work Load

The service load for family assistants also varied from the original plan. For reasons of personal security the first training group decided to work in pairs. This pattern was followed by only a few family assistants from later groups. Some of the original teams broke up and worked individually while others continued the team work for the duration of the project.

The teams usually had a service load equivalent to two individuals working alone. Over a period of time individual family assistants worked continuously with anywhere from four to 15 families, seldom having less than their quota of five. The total number of families visited by each family assistant or team over the duration of the project ranged from six to 41. This fluctuation and deviation can be attributed to a number of factors including the intensity of the problem families faced that necessitated closer and more frequent contact. The complexity of the service could vary from a phone call setting up an agency appointment to a legal tangle involving locating legal help and accompanying the person through a series of legal procedures, sometimes to interpret to a Spanish-speaking person and sometimes to be sure the case was not forgotten. The family assistant's ability and willingness to recruit new families also influenced service load turnover and duration.

Troublesome Problems Involving Service Delivery

Several service delivery problems emerged from analysis of family service data and interviews with the staff. Substudies of selected families were undertaken to clarify some of the issues raised and led to more explicit formulation of some policy and operating questions. Tentative conclusions of both short and long term policy implications grew out of these analyses. In this section a list of some of the questions that guided the substudies and resulting conclusions are summarized.

- In view of the project's overall objectives, what are appropriate activities to undertake with families in addition to teaching?
- What gaps in basic skills and knowledge became apparent and needed to be supplemented when family assistants attempted to help families?
- What additional organizational and supervisory help did family assistants need in order to do the kind of work intended in the project proposal?
- How could the project staff locate and stimulate the interest of families potentially receptive to home management and consumer education?
- How much time (i.e. duration of service and length of visits, etc.) should be devoted to a single family?
- Are there differences among family assistants' personality, skills or approach that affects the type of service given?
- Are home management and consumer education topics better taught to low-income urban residents in groups?

Some Conclusions

Substudies were carried out using elderly, one-visit families and those receiving prolonged service. The substudies contribute to an understanding of these problems and point to practices that might be incorporated in future projects.

1) The elderly families' records were studied quite intensively during the project's life because services needed were as a rule not those for which the project was intended. Policy questions centered around the amount of project time that should be spent on nonteaching activities and appropriate supplementary training for work with elderly persons. Policy clarity about time commitment was important because the elderly families tended to continue to need repetitious service as long as they lived in the area. If the project continued to take on additional elderly families for the same type of service, a higher and higher percent of staff time would be absorbed and less would be available for teaching younger families.

2) The study of families receiving prolonged service brought out the need for policy decisions, leadership, and supervision in defining and carrying out the project's task. The analysis showed that the focus of service could be shifted from expediting to teaching with strong leadership. However, this closer adherence to stated project objectives meant not doing what many people felt was most important.

3) An analysis of families visited only once was combined with a review of the recruiting practices. The outcome suggests that in any project a substantial amount of time should be allowed for finding the families for

whom the service is appropriate and for interpreting it to them. Whether this recruiting should be left entirely to the newly trained family assistants is a policy question.

4) All three substudies revealed skills or techniques that family assistants felt they needed in order to serve families well.

   a. Techniques for approaching families to offer project service.

   b. Teaching techniques.

   c. Ways of arousing interest in home management and consumer education.

   d. Additional knowledge of resources for special problems.

   e. Skill in recognizing when work was unproductive and in terminating contact without creating ill will.

5) All three substudies though dealing with diverse issues and groups suggest that policy clarity and strong supervision is needed in any ongoing service program that is highly dependent upon paraprofessionals.

   a. Explicit policy guidelines to indicate an acceptable range of service would permit service flexibility but help avoid drifting into time-consuming unproductive patterns.

   b. Family assistants needed continuous help from supervisors in the techniques listed earlier.

STUDIES OF SUBGROUPS

Segments of the population were studied when it appeared that the pattern of service differed from what the project staff had expected. A substudy of elderly families was based on the service pattern developed in response to the needs of this particular age group. Prolonged service and one-visit families were identified for study on the basis of the time spent with them.

ELDERLY FAMILIES

One group of 93 elderly was studied because they made up almost 20 percent of the families served and absorbed a high proportion of the family assistants' time in terms of total visits and duration of service. Very litrle teaching was done with elderly families. However, there was a strong tendency to continue work with them because many of their needs were readily recognizable and the family assistants felt competent to help them. Many lived alone and were pleased to have visitors once their suspicions about strangers were allayed. Although they did not need institutional care, most of them were not able to get around easily enough to make use of the senior citizens center.

The elderly were almost entirely dependent on public assistance, pensions, or social security. Forty percent lived in apartments reserved for the use of elderly persons in Wyckoff. Fifteen percent lived in Gowanus and 45 percent lived in the surrounding area. Most of those living in the area, but not in public housing, had very inadequate or inappropriate housing. They could no longer negotiate the stairs to the upper floors or the building was badly deteriorated. In some instances housing was a problem because they had been asked for various reasons to leave the dwelling they were occupying. Forty-eight percent were of Puerto Rican or other Spanish-speaking origins. Twenty-six percent had an inadequate command of English. Thirty-six percent were black and 16 percent were white.

Twenty-one percent of the elderly were classified as multiproblem compared with 12 percent of the nonelderly and 14 percent of all families served by the project.

This substudy implies that extension programs designed for elderly families should be accompanied by analyses of their problems and resources. Staff should be trained explicitly for this work, and there should be close affiliation with a service agency able to expand into home visits to provide assistance other than teaching.

The four case summaries below illustrate the circumstances in which family assistants found elderly persons and the way they responded to individual needs. The first two were classified as Type 2, medium load, and the last two as multiproblem families.

The amount of teaching reported in the first example was exceptional in contrast to the general pattern for service with elderly. It was done by a family assistant who was very articulate and took the teaching part of the role seriously. The second example is more typical, with the focus on service, moral support, and expediting. The third example illustrates a type of situation that appeared in the visit records a number of times and may be expected to become more frequent as the state enforces the policy of not using hospital space for persons whose main problem is senility. In these cases the possibility of teaching is minimal, but there is obviously need for some sort of personal attention.

In the fourth example there was again little opportunity for teaching home management information. The family assistants concentrated on personal service and obtaining the help of other agencies. The problems were obviously beyond the scope of the family assistants' duties or areas of competence.

The duration of contact and number of visits per family was higher for elderly families than for others. Though these cases represented atypical families in terms of months of contact and average number of visits, the living arrangements and problems are fairly typical of elderly worked with in the project.

Fifty-five percent of the elderly contacted were living alone; 16 percent with their spouse or another elderly person; 12 percent with an adult relative; eight percent with a minor such as a grandchild or great-grandchild.

EXAMPLES

Elderly black man living alone in public housing; lame and needed assistance with shopping and care of apartment. Family assistant offered moral support and personal service but also attempted a great deal of teaching. He gained confidence in the family assistant and later she learned that he was worried because his son was a dope addict. Service was discontinued when project closed but family assistant found him a housekeeper before she left. Ten months, 36 visits.

> "He is trying to learn everything I could teach. He is taking a lot of time to do most things but he is trying to have clean and pretty apartmant. He is eating better meals, which we call balanced meals. He told me he learned a lot from me. But he is still putting too much water when he cooks. He used to cook this way for a long time. I think it is not so easy to change everything right away. He knows how to catch sales now and when I ask him to be ready with list of groceries, he looks at advertisements in paper first. Also discusses menus. Even washing own clothes is a big thing for him, because he washed without his neighbor's help. I told him about my training. Of course he felt a little bad and asked me to find a homemaker if it is possible. He told me when he had some homemakers they did not treat him so nice and try to take some things from him. He is a little afraid to have a homemaker but I think all of them aren't trying to take something from him. I told him about it. But he has had a hard life, it is hard for him to trust people. I asked him how did I work for him? He says he knows I am not trying to take anything from him."

Elderly white man, living alone in area, arthritic and can't do for himself. Needed more money and help with housekeeping and food. Family assistant helped him get money from welfare for clothing, and worked with DAB (Disabled, Aged, Blind - a division of Social Services) to get him a wheelchair and a TV set donated by another source. Was trying to find housekeeper and better apartment. Family assistants provided personal service--shopping, fixing meals, cleaning apartment, doing laundry, etc. Sixty-six visits over a period of 15 months; discontinued only because project was closing.

> "Feels confident somebody cares and very cheerful. Refuses to go to foster home. Hopes to get a better apartment soon. We have been able to get most of the things needed and give courage. DAB worked with family assistant and Mr. . . . has improved in many ways. (Can now get to corner store by self with aid of wheelchair.) May be moving to Senior Citizens apartment with elevator."

Elderly black woman living alone in housing project. She was a former mental patient and family assistants were a little afraid at first but knew she needed their help. They provided personal service, taking her to the clinic and shopping, and served as companions to cheer her up. They tried to encourage use of the Consumers Club and Senior Citizens but she was unable to get out much. About midway in their contact with her, family assistants were able to get a housekeeper for her but continued to visit her periodically until she died about six months before the project closed. Seventeen months, 53 visits.

Elderly black family bringing up a five year old great-grandchild, living in the area in deplorable housing conditions. The apartment was dilapidated and cold, the grandson had asthma and the grandparents had arthritis and heart trouble. The family assistant provided personal service for the grandmother, shopped for them, and kept trying to find them decent housing. After many months, the group worker contacted Project Rescue, and the apartment was fixed somewhat--at least the holes were patched. Family assistant counseled the family about the child, who needed psychiatric care, and visited the school for them. The grandmother had a stroke and died just before the project closed, and family assistant worried that the grandfather was drinking too much and was unable to care for the child properly.

> "Homemaker stated family assistant had helped them in many ways--took the grandchild to the clinic and then to hospital with double pneumonia. Helped them get their check twice and went shopping for them. Personal service for the grandmother--combing hair, etc. Morale is improved a little."

RECRUITING FAMILIES AND INTERPRETING PROJECT SERVICES

Recruiting of families proved to be a major task. At first, group workers approached families suggested by tenant organizations, a parents' group, and housing managers, offering the help of the project. This approach got little response except from a few families with many complicated problems and may have contributed to a negative image that made it harder later to interest families who did not have severe problems.

The difficulties encountered were described by the project director in the first six-month report.

> Families on one list were sent letters explaining the project. They were asked to reply on a stamped postcard whether they were interested or not interested in having a family assistant visit them. One card from this list of 33 names was returned; it was marked, "not interested." Follow-up telephone calls yielded no positive response. Families whose names were on other lists were visited by group workers and/or family assistants. (27, p. 7)

The project's service was subsequently offered in mailings, handbills, and public announcements, as well as through interviews with representatives of organizations. However, meaningful contact with families was most commonly made through personal acquaintance and door knocking.

In the long run, the family assistants had major responsibility for face-to-face description and interpretation of the project. Usually working in pairs, they went from door to door to explain the project and to find people who were willing to listen and to try the service. In many projects a teaching homemaker is assigned to a family by a professional member of the team when the need for this type of help has been recognized by the family and the professional. In this project the theory was that any family could benefit by knowing more about money management and ways to avoid traps for consumers so the families were not selected on the basis of diagnosed deficiencies of any kind. This project began in a period when the need for consumer protection had been widely acknowledged. College personnel and policy makers knew that "the poor pay more" but the poor apparently had other problems on their minds. There were few referrals from other agencies, and some that came were the result of misunderstandings. Some thought the project was intended to provide housekeepers or domestic help.

There was great variation in family assistants' ability and self-confidence in recruiting. Even when prepared in role-playing sessions, many family assistants found approaching people they did not know very difficult, while others seemed to enjoy the opportunity. Some were upset when doors were slammed in their faces or people refused to open doors. Perhaps some who had difficulty making initial contact might have done very well once they started working with the families if someone else had made the initial contact. Some worked mostly with families they already knew and reported little difficulty.

This personal recruiting meant that each family assistant interpreted the project's goals and services in her own way. She offered "help" and to many family assistants and families "help" meant something more tangible than information. Perhaps inevitably the program became one of trying to cope with immediate, easily recognized needs.

The family assistants showed ambivalence about the value of what they could offer. Some found topics and services they could most comfortably perform, and in effect became specialists. There was also ambivalence on the part of many family assistants and even some group workers toward the teaching part of their jobs. Their interpretation of stated project goals made it easy to develop patterns of doing what was wanted by the families willing to enter into a continuing one-to-one relationship.

Hostility and suspicion were encountered quite often in the early days of the project. Family assistants said families they approached could not believe they were really giving all this service free. Families had been misled and exploited so often in the past that they were fearful of strangers. One of the more persistent family assistants described her experience in making contact with a family she was sure needed her help.

> The first time I went I knocked on the door and got no response other than some noises inside. I came back another day and knocked again. The door opened a crack to see what I wanted. I started to explain our program and the person said, "Come back another time." By the fourth time I had returned I was able to come in and sit down and have a drink of coffee with the woman. People in the city are quite suspicious.

Another family assistant noted the distrust even of her as a community resident.

> We have gone out into the neighborhood. We have been accepted not so much for the program but because the people did know most of us before we got into this program. They let us in because of that and quite a few have accepted the program. A lot of the people hadn't accepted us because they still can't see getting something for nothing. They don't really trust us.

One of the family assistants observed:

> We're all well known in the neighborhood; so it is not very hard to get in. Then we go in and explain the program. They know us a little, but they are still a little doubtful. Then after a few visits they start to open up. Sometimes it's very hard to get in.

Negative reception was less frequent after the project became better known. At the close of the project one family assistant noted:

> I think the Cornell-OEO Project did make an impact on the community because there weren't too many places around that you could visit in this area of Brooklyn that you couldn't find someone who had heard about Cornell-OEO. The name is very famous--I don't know if they deserve it but it is!

Difficulty in enlisting families is reflected in the records of those visited only once, comprising 25 percent of all families for whom contacts were recorded. Little is known about these families, what happened during the visits or why contact was not continued. For two-fifths the only topic was an explanation of the project. Available data does not show whether the critical differences between one-visit contacts and longer contacts can be attributed to family characteristics or to the family assistants who approached them.

Too little is known about the one-visit families to classify them according to the problem-load typology. Routine demographic data indicate that the differences between one-visit families and others are minor.

Differences among family assistants in aptitude for approaching people have been mentioned. There were also undoubtedly differences in extent and completeness of reporting, since many family assistants and group workers were never convinced of the value of turning in records on brief contacts. Peak periods for reporting one-visit contacts came in the first few months of operation and again after the third class was trained.

The difficulty of recruiting families had several implications for training, supervision, total number of families reached, and general program management. Some family assistants were said to be reluctant to discontinue work with families even when the work was not productive. Each was expected to have five families. Replacements were likely to be hard to find. Estimates of numbers to be reached should allow time for recruiting. Training and supervision should include even more help with techniques for approaching and working with families.

The recruiting problem suggests that supervisors should take greater responsibility for this step in the program in future activities of this type since the family assistants' open role was of only partial help.

STUDY OF PROLONGED SERVICE

When a review of visit reports revealed that many families were being seen for more than the planned six months, analyses of prolonged service families were undertaken in April and December, 1970, and again at the close of the project.

In addition to the problem-service relationship the major questions were:

1) What were the characteristics of the families receiving prolonged service?

2) Were some of the family assistants more likely than others to "hang on" to families for extended periods?

3) Was there evidence of progress toward a recognized goal?

Scrutiny of the families receiving prolonged service contributed to understanding the work of the project in several ways. It provided a basis for identifying the different kinds of service being given by family assistants. These analyses led to development of the problem-load typology and the generalizations about response of the different problem-load types to teaching. It also demonstrated that with firm direction from supervisors, the emphasis of the project could change from expediting to teaching. As a strategy it seemed likely that any changes that had taken place in families served would be more clearly evident in those instances of maximum contact.

Characteristics of Prolonged-Service Families

There were 168 families who received service for seven months or more. They closely resembled all families contacted with the exception of the concentration of elderly. The elderly made up 26 percent of the prolonged-service group and only 19 percent of the 440 families classified by life cycle. The elderly families were excluded from most of the subsequent comparisons because they had been studied separately. Their inclusion also tended to skew the distribution in atypical fashion. When three elderly families with grandchildren and 43 elderly families living alone or with other adults were removed, the prolonged-service group of nonelderly was composed of 122 families.

The prolonged-service families were classified on the basis of problem load, and 34 were Type 1, light problem load; 67 were medium load or Type 2; and 21 were Type 3, heavy problem load. People with many problems such as the elderly and those with language difficulties tended to be in the prolonged-service group, but there were many others who received prolonged service.

This fact was at odds with the assumption made early in the project that prolonged-service families and multiproblem families were one and the same. Furthermore, this analysis brought to light a finding with significant policy implications. The families receiving prolonged service covered almost the whole gamut of families contacted. Their ethnic identification was quite similar to the entire group served as was their residence. However, the differences between Types I and 3 were greater than differences between the prolonged-service families and families that received service for a shorter period of time. Type I families were more evenly divided between Wyckoff Gardens, Gowanus Houses, and the nonpublic housing in the area. In contrast, Type 3 families were concentrated in the area's nonpublic housing.

Were some of the family assistants more likely to "hang on" to families for extended periods of time than others? Almost all the family assistants who worked with nonelderly Type 3 families for long periods of time were in the first two training waves. They also worked for longer periods with Type I families, as did some family assistants from Waves III and IV. The family assistant's length of employment in the project and the focus of the project at the time she was trained seemed to be the factors most closely associated with prolonged service.

A few family assistants in Waves I and II did a great deal of teaching even with families having many problems. It is possible that family assistants may have selected families to work with on the basis of their own preference for providing certain types of service. The available data is not sufficient to provide an answer. Some family assistants worked with all three problem-load types giving different services on an individual basis.

Although family assistants who were already working with multiproblem families continued their work with some of them, it was possible for the focus of the project's work to change in the second year. With a few, family assistants began to emphasize teaching. With others they tried the home management topics, and when there was no interest they terminated contact. The major change was that no new multiproblem families were added for prolonged service after the change in policy. The family assistants in the fourth training class, therefore, had no multiproblem families for long periods of time and did far less expediting than the family assistants who started earlier. The official data family assistants provided on this issue may be misleading. Informally, family assistants commented that they got the group workers to do some of the expediting during the second year and did some on their own without reporting it.

The percentage of work that could be called teaching, therefore, was influenced by the characteristics of the family assistant's training, supervision, and choice of family as well as by the family's circumstances.

In considering the evidence of progress toward a recognized goal, the assumption must be made that the intended objective of the project was primarily teaching home management and consumer education. Development of conventional measuring instruments would have been inappropriate for a number of reasons. It would not have been possible to use such instruments with community resistance to research. Furthermore, the individual family assistant dealing with each family had a unique objective suited to the situation. It was not a uniform one such as teaching everyone how to cook a given dish; so standard questions would have been inappropriate. The available quantitative evidence of teaching activity was previously cited in terms of proportion of time spent on teaching service and proportion of families with whom family assistants carried on teaching activity. Engaging in a sustained teaching activity is being treated as an operational definition of effectiveness or at least of working toward an intended goal.

A second kind of evidence is based on the reports family assistants made about what they observed in their work with families. They were asked to report any signs of change that could be attributed to their work. The following comments are taken from routine visit reports and termination summaries by different family assistants.

While comments of this sort are not the basis for precise measurement and extravagant claims, they do offer evidence that some families were getting the kind of informal instruction intended in the proposal. Approximately 10 percent of the records included comments similar to the ones reported here.

Young, multiproblem family

- Homemaker feels sad due to the fact that she is no longer eligible for assistance from us because she is moving to a housing project outside the area. She has a slew of problems; they don't seem to cease. It's been a pleasure working with her. She expressed how grateful she was for the help she received; also she said she learned an awful lot. I feel very proud.

Young family, light problem load

- Food shopping comparison of great benefit, also clothing; Mrs. W. sews well and some suggestions to her on different decoration worked wonders.

Young family, medium problem load

- Husband allows wife more freedom. Family assistant encouraged him in American way. Sense of personal value--self-confidence in dealing with whatever may happen. More aware of American customs.

Families with children in school, medium problem load
(Five different families)

- Got her to take children to Sunday School. Have learned to save money shopping; how to make food more attractive.

- Learned cooking with surplus food; more confidence in shopping, saves money. Happy because they are learning to make new recipes and clean and homemaker was very happy with the way her home looked for the holidays. She couldn't thank me enough for my help and suggestions and her health is better since she goes for check-ups at Red Hook Health Center. (She is pregnant.)

- Homemaker does more work in house--before she just stayed inside and did nothing.

- Painted the apartment, used many suggestions from pamphlets on painting, decorating, and furniture. Daughter learned to crochet and has made several articles.

- We compared various products and saved a couple of pennies. She seems satisfied in comparing and told me that she never really did this before.

Adult family, language problem

- Had cleaned apartment so well it was a surprise for family assistant when she saw it. Family assistant had given her some tips on it before and was very pleased that she had taken her up with them. Her place was clean as could be. Will attend sewing workshop.

These comments show the areas in which families revealed changes in outlook and behavior to be unique to their personal situation; so the program could not provide stereotyped or packaged solutions in meeting community needs.

Home Management Instruction in Group Settings

Most of the family assistants' work with families was on the one-to-one basis already described. Additional families were reached through informal group instruction.

WORKSHOPS

The term "workshop" was used for a series of meetings or classes built around a single unifying theme and focused on one topic. Usually the instructional format included demonstrations of methods and materials as well as the presentation of information. It also included work on each participant's own project and help on an individual basis in culminating in the production of something tangible such as a dress or refinished piece of furniture.

Most of the workshops described in the section on in-service training were open to family assistants only. They were intended to improve the family assistants' skill for their own benefit as well as to increase their command of a topic or skill. They could then teach others with a greater feeling of competency. Some family assistants reported that taking up a new topic every day during the pre-service training course and having to cover a great many different topics left them feeling inadequately informed to teach many of the topics covered.

The workshop pattern enabled family assistants to devote enough time to one topic and to feel better prepared. The feeling of adequacy was usually increased if two or three worked together.

WORKSHOPS IN FALL OF 1970

In the fall of 1970 workshops were conducted on three topics--sewing, cooking, and home decoration. These were open to both the family assistants and families in the neighborhood. It was planned to have family assistants help in preparing for the sessions, the topics to be covered, the means of presentation, and also to take a turn in putting on a demonstration. Each workshop was to run for 20 sessions. As it turned out, 47 different people participated, other than those employed by the project. Thirteen were members of families already receiving individual service from the project and 34 were completely new families. Family assistants invited the families they were working with to attend. Some were disappointed when a number of the food sessions were cancelled because they had expected some of their families to attend.

One of the sewing workshops was held in the evening and was well attended. Unexpectedly, some of the participants in the group were 10 and 12 year old children. Part of the success of these sessions was attributed to the babysitting provided during all sessions and paid for by the project. They were held near home, in a community church and in the community space at Gowanus Houses. Participants brought their own materials but the project provided the tools and equipment. At the end of the series there was a pre-Christmas festival which gave participants an opportunity to exhibit the foods, clothing, and home furnishings they had completed.

INFORMAL GROUPS LED BY FAMILY ASSISTANTS

Early in 1970 several family assistants organized small group teaching and demonstration sessions that by the end of the year had resulted in considerable exposure of project content. Reports completed on 56 different sessions reveal that 43 meetings concentrated on foods and related topics and 13 of the sessions dealt with sewing. Usually two or more family assistants worked together on the plans and arrangements. Publicity was almost entirely by word of mouth, although some announcements were made through organizations in the area. The foods sessions were almost all held in apartments in the neighborhood, some in the homes of family assistants, and others in the homes of other families.

One pattern was established by a group made up of members of the mothers' club of the Colony House Head Start Program. These women met 16 times with attendance ranging from seven to 20 and averaging 11. The place of meetings was rotated, sometimes in the apartment of the family assistant who was the major leader of the group and sometimes at the homes of other members. This group followed a course outline on foods, including meal planning, shopping, and food preparation. The family assistants got help in planning from the key staff but conducted the sessions themselves. The main problem reported was that apartments were too hot and crowded for the size of the group.

Two family assistants conducted 15 sessions together, with attendance ranging from two to seven and averaging four. Most of these were held in the apartments of the families with whom these family assistants were currently working individually. These families invited neighbors and friends.

Another family assistant held five food demonstrations in her own apartment with attendance ranging from two to 14. The largest group was made up of members of an English class from the Parents'Lounge, a group that met in the housing project and was associated with the nearby grade school. This family assistant was bilingual and gave her sessions in both English and Spanish. No baby-sitting was provided and the sessions were discontinued partly because the family assistant felt she could not ask women not to bring their children but really could not have them in the apartment while giving demonstrations. An additional problem was that there was no provision for the food supplies for the demonstration after the surplus foods program ended.

Still another pattern was developed when traditional one-to-one visits to a family were expanded to include neighbors when a topic of interest, such as use of leftover turkey, was planned. Again, invitations were by word of mouth and the others who attended were immediate neighbors and friends and possibly relatives of the family.

Only the mother's club group among those described had some continuity in the membership of the group and a specified subject matter. This group started by drawing members from another group that continued to meet independently. At the end of the project it seemed likely to continue to meet as a cohesive group.

The groups that were organized for sewing instruction held their sessions in public meeting places such as the Parents' Lounge and the neighborhood house. Two family assistants conducted a series of three sessions for parents but dropped it when the interest of the group lagged and the size of the group dwindled. Ten sessions on making spring clothing were held for the Mother's Club at Colony House. This program included shopping for fabrics and instruction in clothing construction. In these sessions there was a good deal of turnover and each person came in with a different level of skill so the instruction had to be individual, even though it had been planned as a class.

Still another pattern for reaching people was followed by one family assistant who spent a great deal of time at the Parents' Lounge. She sometimes talked to a group but more often explained the kinds of services the project could give to individual parents, particularly the home economics course content and many aspects of children's getting along in the public school. In this informal group setting parents were being told about other programs open to them. Both the professional working with the group and the Cornell-OEO paraprofessional seemed to be reinforcing each other's efforts rather than creating a situation in which the family was being pulled between two organizations. This type of organizational support is noteworthy.

Most of the objectives that gave rise to the work with groups seemed to be met to some extent. It is well known that many adult education programs have difficulty in attracting low-income women to classes. The factors that seemed to contribute to attendance were informality, personal acquaintance with family assistants, convenience of location in a place near home, provision for baby-sitting, and relevance of course content to immediate interest. When the participants were making a garment or a home decoration, individual instruction was necessary because of different levels of skill and experience. Materials for demonstrations before larger groups also were necessary. Attendance at the fall sewing workshop was not as large as had been hoped for. Some sessions were cancelled. However, it seems that those who did attend were very much interested and were successful in completing garments.

From the viewpoint of the family assistants' gain, the workshop served to give them more mastery of subject matter on one particular topic than they could get from the eight-week course covering many topics. Increased skill and practice in leading small groups helped to increase family assistants' confidence in undertaking teaching. A real opportunity to demonstrate their leadership skills was provided through the informal groups as these sessions were initiated by family assistants and planned by them with some help from the key staff. The practice in planning, publicizing, arranging, and conducting both the workshops and the informal groups is a gain that the family assistants may be able to use later in work with the community. These sessions also provided an opportunity for family assistants whose talents lay in the direction of group work rather than one-to-one family relationship.

Many of the participants who attended the workshop and took part in the informal groups were not families the family assistants had been working with directly. There is no indication that the group experience led to individual work with any of these families. However, in the home-based groups it is safe to assume that the families could have asked for individual work if they had wanted it as the groups were very small and informal. There is no feedback directly from any of the families.

Another factor that seemed to be critical was planning toward short-term tangible results. The group instruction method probably was very appropriate for families whose main interest was in food preparation, clothing construction, making decorations, or refinishing furniture. Some comparison shopping was worked in with the meal planning and the buying of material in the sewing workshops. Apparently this method was not tried for budgeting or more general money management topics.

IMPLICATIONS FROM WORK WITH GROUPS

1) Work with groups reached additional people not reached using the one-to-one approach.

2) Some family assistants liked the expanded role as group leader and were able to initiate plans for small, home-based groups.

3) Cooperation with other agencies was unsatisfactory when objectives were incompatible but often worked well if both groups clearly understood how they could support and not duplicate or defeat each other's efforts.

4) Some people who had been "families" getting individual attention were attracted to groups for instruction in sewing, cooking, and home management. This method was not tested for more abstract aspects of money and home management.

5) No groups moved from instruction in homemaking to social action during the period of study.

6) Family assistants needed a lot of staff help in preparation initially. They also derived support by working in twos or threes and threes and with a group worker available but in the background.

7) The group instruction was of interest primarily to families who would be classified as Type I and 2, and rarely to a multiproblem family.

VII. INTERACTION WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Prior to the arrival of the Cornell-OEO Project in the community there had been a history of youth gang wars, ethnic frictions as new nationality groups moved in, diffuse leadership, and limited community participation in matters affecting the entire area. The 1968 school strike provided the occasion for focusing concern about a shared problem that was close to home for a large number of families with children. To many people the school crisis provided the opportunity for coming to know their neighbors through working together. From that point on, according to the project director, there was a new tone to the community. By this he meant that there was a better community spirit and people felt that their voices could be heard.

However, the situation was not one of complete harmony and unity. The Community Progress Corporation (the local anti-poverty board) for the larger South Brooklyn area was in the midst of a factional dispute that resulted in the loss of professional leadership and organizational effectiveness. At one point it went into receivership. As a result the whole South Brooklyn area was handicapped by not having a mechanism for securing funds for anti-poverty programs available in other parts of the city. In addition, there was competition within the community for funds, programs, and jobs. Sometimes this competition was friendly; other times it was less than friendly. As a program funded entirely by the state, the Cornell-OEO Project did not have to compete with other organizations dependent on the city Human Resources Administration and the local Community Progress Corporation.

It became increasingly clear to the leaders in community organizations that accomplishments of any magnitude would require greater grass roots participation as well as more coordinated effort by people in leadership positions. Even the local leaders had difficulty convincing their neighbors that time spent in organizing for social or political action would pay dividends.

CORNELL-OEO PROJECT PROVIDES A FOCAL POINT

In preliminary discussions between project representatives and local organization leaders it was clear that the local leaders welcomed a project that would mean jobs for a considerable number of local people.

In addition to an employment opportunity and one-to-one services to be provided to community residents, the project brought a number of elements that were to make a contribution to the community. Possibly these less visible contributions might be of more lasting value in solving community problems than the clearly evident short-term benefits. Many of the activities described here were undertaken in response to the recognition that the most acute problems besetting people could not be solved on an individual basis alone. They required joint organizational effort and the attraction of resources from outside the area.

An important aspect of the project was the proposed professional staff that would add significantly to the trained leadership available to work on community problems. The director, particularly, had great sensitivity to community needs and concern for strengthening community organization beyond the minimal project obligations. With secretarial help available and a flexible though modest budget he could offer to handle such organizational details as getting out a mailing or arranging for a meeting place on short notice. During the first year of the project he was kept busy establishing the project and integrating it to the point where the other key staff could handle training and service at the individual level and leave him relatively free to work at the second or community level. During the final stage of the project, when his office was in the immediate area and the size of the project operation had stabilized, a substantial part of his time went into community organization efforts.

Recruiting reliable leaders from existing community groups to be trained and employed as family assistants in the new project may have temporarily weakened some organizations, but in the long run it probably strengthened them by adding to the local pool of resident leadership potential. A few were "borrowed back" for a few weeks by programs in which they had worked before. The leadership training given toward the end of the project was specifically intended to increase the effectiveness of the local residents as they moved on into other organizations.

Another element provided by the project was access to the expertise and sources of information that could be tapped at Cornell University and the New York State Office for Community Affairs. Arranging for consultants from Cornell to advise on housing programs most likely to be workable for the area at that time was a service to other groups working on housing as well as an indication of the project's concern about community level problems. Related to this aspect was the opportunity given to local leaders to attend meetings and to talk about area problems and aspirations with local and state political leaders who visited the project.

The project activities provided the occasion for many discussions with leaders of other groups. This enabled leaders to get better acquainted, to learn to trust each other, and to share experiences and skills. There were get-acquainted teas for each new class of trainees, graduation ceremonies followed by social events, and fashion shows. All of these were occasions when community people were welcomed. At the organizational level, arranging for use of space and other facilities of local organizations brought staff members together. In addition, there were many contacts with the staff of branch offices of city-wide agencies like the Social Services Department and the OEO-Legal Services Office. The constant turnover in these offices prevented these contacts from developing into closer personal working relationships.

THE INTERAGENCY COUNCIL

Perhaps the contribution of greatest satisfaction to the project director, and possibly of the most long-term significance, was the project's part in bringing together the organizations serving the immediate project area. At first, meetings of leaders and staff from area organizations and agencies were called simply for an exchange of information. Later, an Interagency Council was formed, with regular monthly meetings, an agenda and a calendar of area events. Coordination of program planning was one of the initial goals. After the first few meetings a more vigorous attack on common problems was planned. The group agreed to work together in writing proposals to try to get money to increase day care facilities. This was a need that had been talked about for years but could not get far without joint effort and endorsement. Work also was begun to bring in a program to help drug users. Drug use was rising at an alarming rate all over New York City during this period and families in the area were deeply concerned about their young people.

The organizations and individuals brought together in this council were public school personnel, church leaders, the CPC, Colony-South Brooklyn Neighborhood Houses, the local branch of the YWCA, the Brooklyn Heights Community Center, and the various parent groups affiliated with these local organizations. All the churches represented had concerns with service programs, day care, medical, educational or recreational services. Groups were added as the council developed a more formal structure and common concerns were recognized. While the project director could be a catalyst and a communication coordinator in these efforts to revitalize the community, his major endeavor was to encourage organizations with a permanent base in the area to pursue neighborhood improvement in a concerted way. As a separate organization, with only temporary funding from one year to the next and a planned life of less than three years, the project could not act as sponsor of a long-term project like a day care center or a housing development. However, it could bring people together and help find technical advice. At the end of the project it looked as if the Interagency Council was well enough established to continue after the departure of the project staff.

RANGE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY

Organizational activity was carried on at two levels, some within the immediate neighborhood and some in a wider community. There were innumerable interchanges with the other agencies serving the immediate project neighborhood. The formation of the Interagency Council has already been described. Particularly close working arrangements developed with three organizations: the Cuyler-Warren Community Church, the Colony-South Brooklyn Neighborhood Houses, and the nearby elementary school, P.S. 38.

Colony-South Brooklyn was a youth and recreation center, that conducted programs in its own building and also in community space at the two housing projects. This was the base of the Headstart Mothers' Club to which several family assistants belonged. Space was rented for special events and there was constant exchange between the professionals of the two organizations.

Two programs which the Cornell-OEO was instrumental in bringing into the neighborhood were affiliated with Colony-South Brooklyn instead of being set up as completely independent organizations like the Cornell-OEO Project itself. These were the summer 4-H programs in 1969 and 1970 and the expanded Nutrition Education Program that began in 1970.

There was constant contact with the nearby elementary school, P.S. 38. These contacts were with both the school staff and with the director of the related Parents' Lounge. This parent-school parricipation group was supported by Title I ESEA funds and had space for meetings in Wyckoff Gardens. Some family assistants concentrated their attention on this organization, introduced consumer education material into the program and offered help to individual members. There was constant pressure to improve instruction in the school and to intervene when injustices were reported.

The only organization in the immediate area with an ongoing consumer education program was the Cuyler-Warren Community Church. The nonprofit Consumers Club was one of the many services sponsored by the church. Club members could buy fresh fruit, vegetables, and meats advantageously once a week since the club was able to buy on a wholesale basis. Some family assistants were already members and others joined and encouraged families they contacted to take advantage of this opportunity. Cuyler-Warren was the organization with the greatest potential for service rivalry, and effort was made to avoid encroaching on service areas already adequately covered by that group. Some limited attempts at joint planning were made, such as the presentation of food preparation workshops in the fall of 1971, but the most frequent and workable collaboration was rental of space for Cornell-OEO Project events and cooperation in publicizing them.

The immediate area served by the project centered around the two housing projects. It was part of the larger area served by the South Brooklyn Community Progress Corporation, the Red Hook-Gowanus Health District and local school district number 15, each with different boundaries. One of the problems faced by the neighborhood leaders was to find ways to be effective in securing representation and influencing decisions made in the larger community which itself is only part of Brooklyn.

There were many opportunities for cooperation with the Health District and the City Social Services Department in addition to helping individual families obtain benefits. Contacts with the Senior Citizens Center in Wyckoff Gardens were frequent. This center was supported by the Social Services Department and intended to serve the entire Red Hook-South Brooklyn health district.

Family assistants were invited to help at the Health Department booth at the neighborhood nutrition fair sponsored by the Social Services Department in May, 1970. The family assistants helped with the booth, made cookies and prepared orange nog from donable food supplies. They also distributed samples and gave out recipes. They prepared raw vegetables as an example of family snack items.

Later they were asked to help recruit and preregister people for a three-day health fair. This was a diagnostic service coordinated by the Brooklyn

Unit, American Cancer Society, and 11 medical and community organizations and agencies participated.

The project director was publicity chairman for the fair and key staff and family assistants spent many hours ringing doorbells to encourage attendance. They were discouraged by finding few people at home or willing to answer the door but had the experience of working as part of a complicated event that lasted several days and attracted between 2,000 and 3,000 people.

The Health Department also enlisted the family assistants' help in spotting houses where there were likely to be lead poisoning cases, as part of a case finding survey in high-risk areas.

The area in which there was the most effort to be influential was in the election of the community school board. The lesson of the spring, 1970 elections had been that too many candidates from the minority groups in the project area had divided the votes and defeated each other. In the following winter interest in concerns of parents in other parts of the district was cultivated. However, the problem of obtaining representation on the district board had not been solved.

Several family assistants were on the local committee appointed by the city planning board to represent the project area. They found these meetings discouraging because there were no immediate results. This group of family assistants may have been the source of some of the feeling that the needs were known and that no more studies of the area were needed.

There was some success in making use of resources from outside the area. The project obtained the use of the mayor's free bus program for transportation to a state park at least once. Project personnel also found out how to obtain voting information from the League of Women Voters when unable to get it from the Board of Elections.

The existence of the project introduced some ideas that may bear fruit. For example, the apartment used by the project as the center of teaching and service activities was set aside after the project ended for the use of adult education programs sponsored by the public schools. This is a first for the New York City Housing Authority and schools.

It is too soon to tell what the long-term effect of the project has been. However, the part that the project staff feel is most likely to be of real benefit to the people in the area is the strengthening of relationships and the growth of skill and confidence in working together on common concerns.

VIII. INTERACTION WITH CORNELL PERSONNEL

> The New York State College of Home Economics[1] has skilled teaching and research personnel who are concerned with human development and the quality of the human environment. Food buying, nutrition, care and selection of clothing, housing, housekeeping practices, money management, family relationships, and child care are areas in which the College can actively contribute relevant information and assistance to urban low-income families. The leaders and families cooperating in the project can bring to the attention of the College information about the depth and complexities of problems related to these areas. (26, p. 1)

The official commitment of the College opened the way for faculty and staff to have a part in the project if they wished to do so. The program content and subsequent community feedback suggesting revisions made some faculty members' specialties more directly relevant than others.

FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING

The newly assembled on-site project staff, the project director, assistant director for training and service, and two group workers visited the College. The course outline was set but Miss Suzanne Matsen, in charge of training, solicited help on specific topics and teaching methods. The project staff met informally with departments to present their hopes and plans for the project as well as the training outline. Attendance at these meetings was voluntary as was participation of any kind in the program.

Some faculty offered to assist with one or more training sessions. Others indicated their willingness to make a visit to determine whether they could best participate by teaching or providing materials and content for training. Faculty members' initial reactions seemed to depend to a great extent on their individual feelings about the low-income urban dweller's plight and their own views of their professional obligations.

Over the lifetime of the project visits were made to the site by Cornell staff for many different purposes, as shown in the attached chronological list. The most frequent purpose was to teach one or more sessions in the training course for the paraprofessionals.

The research staff canvassed all who visited from April to December, 1969 and found that 28 out of 46 visits were made for purposes directly related to teaching. The trip to New York City to teach from two to four hours usually meant catching an early plane, a two-hour trip by public transportation from Newark to the demonstration apartment in Wyckoff Gardens, and a late return to Ithaca. Preparations took a day or more when special visuals

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[1] See footnote 1 on p. 1.

STORAGE IDEAS
YOU
SAVE
best space for things used often

Family assistants discuss space-saving ideas

were made. Altogether, the College, through faculty activity, made a substantial contribution of professional time and energy to the success of the training program.

In return, the faculty had an opportunity to try out new teaching materials with a live audience, to broaden their perspectives through face to face discussions of practical urban home management problems, and to assess possibilities for useful research and program planning.

On-site teaching had its rewards as well as its frustrations. The women in the classes were most appreciative of new information presented in an easily understood manner when it seemed to them relevant to their situation, and were warm and generous in their response. Late planes, classes whose members had a limited command of English, and less time allotted than the visiting teacher had prepared to use were frustrations that came to be accepted when working with the program when it was first starting.

Once the program got under way, invitations to come to the site were guarded and limited to people with a reason for being there. Visiting just as "sightseeing" was discouraged because of resentment by family assistants, lack of space in the teaching apartment, and lack of time to "entertain." The director for training said later she realized, but could do little about, the fact that people had misunderstood at times when she had to take care of her class and other urgent administrative duties and was forced to ask guests, who had come 300 miles, to wait.

STUDENT EXPOSURE TO URBAN PERSPECTIVE

Participation by Cornell students was severely limited by the suspicion with which outsiders were viewed as well as by time and space.

One group of students from Professor Harold Feldman's class on poverty visited the site during the 1970 intersession. On that occasion the key staff and some family assistants spent the day with the students. The project director was reluctant to ask community people to cooperate with students, knowing the negative attitude toward questions by outsiders, especially research data collection. He felt the presence of students would be helpful only if they could stay long enough to become known and trusted, probably a minimum of three months. One graduate student employed by the project worked during the summer of 1969 at the site and a few other students accompanied visiting faculty as assistants.

The major contribution to Cornell students' perspective came from the talks on the campus by key staff and family assistants. The project director was particularly in demand because in addition to being very articulate, he had a grasp of official city structure along with agency organization and the local resident viewpoint.

The contribution of the family assistants in these sessions was to bring life to the picture of urban problems that too often was likely to be statistically sterile. Their reports on their encounters with the delivery systems for human services needed by community residents were especially vivid. They also were colorfully articulate in describing the problems of their neighborhood once they got over their timidity. They demonstrated first hand in a most convincing fashion the capacities of the paraprofessional as well. The director felt these trips were stimulating and instructive for the family assistants. Key staff and family assistants held sessions to plan their presentations. Everyone shared the excitement of the trip. Later, reports were made to other family assistants so all came to know more about the College and the concern academic professionals had for the urban dwellers' problems.

Key staff and family assistants also contributed to College conferences on revising publications for the use of low-income families and planning a nutrition education program.

ADMINISTRATORS' FORMAL AND INFORMAL CONTACTS

Administration of the project required many conferences both in Ithaca and New York. Reconciling business office requirements with the less formal style in the project area took many hours.

College administrators were frequently honored guests on ceremonial occasions in South Brooklyn, particularly graduation exercises and political or semipolitical visitations. All these occasions were opportunities for informal exchange of information, which contributed to understanding on both sides. This meant that the project provided the College administration

The Dean presents a graduation certificate to a new family assistant

with a chance to learn something about the adaptations greater involvement in urban activities would require. While much was made of special events, such as graduation and fashion shows, the style of interpersonal relations was informal. Communications had to be primarily by word of mouth, not writing, from the top of the organization to the bottom.

Telephone or face to face conferences with on-site staff gave the College administrator the immediate local reaction to plans. It was this crucial give and take that was missing in preproject action and research planning.

To convey the sheer number and scope of the interactions a list has been compiled enumerating the major visitations by project staff to Ithaca and also by Cornell staff to the South Brooklyn site. Entries include faculty teaching trips, students visiting the site as part of course work and South Brooklyn staff participating in classroom panels or giving lectures to students.

RESEARCHERS VIEWED WITH CAUTION

Opportunities for use of the project as a base for research unrelated to immediate project goals was minimal. In this respect the project could not be considered a prototype for an urban field station. However, College staff learned something about the reality of urban research, just as program planners learned about the pragmatics of urban program undertakings.

Though the often mentioned community resistance to research never fully abated, there were two research efforts that came about in cooperation with the South Brooklyn project. Initially it was hoped that project data or supplementary data gathering on the site might provide material of sufficient quality for M.A. or Ph.D. theses. Two graduate assistants in Ithaca were included in the project budget to help process routine data from the site. This use of graduate student time was relatively unproductive for both student and project, so was dropped in the third year of the project.

Once the program was launched, the community and family assistants' attitude toward all research was clearly declared. Neither student nor faculty research would be welcome unless a clear and quick individual or community payoff was highly probable. One family assistant expressed the feelings of many in these words:

> We don't want students or university researchers coming into our homes to snoop around just to see how poor people live. If you want to come in and can show me how answering your questions or talking with you is going to help me I might think about it if it looks worth my while, but otherwise, you just keep out!

In the years 1967 - 1969 black groups had initiated campaigns of active resistance to participation in research elsewhere in New York City. This resistance was especially directed toward university affiliated researchers. Some South Brooklyn residents believed that investigators were writing books that might enhance the author's academic career, but failed to help the low-income person who cooperated.

RESEARCH ENDORSED BY ON-SITE STAFF

The two research products that grew out of the project are all the more impressive given the hostile climate. The idea that research was simply systematic fact finding was stressed repeatedly by the research staff. A small appliance price survey and housing renovation survey were conducted by project staff and the family assistants who helped found those activities interesting and instructive. On the other hand, similar fact finding about the project's impact on the community was perceived as threatening, so was rejected outright.

Laboratory Testing of Consumer Textile Products

Professor Evelyn Stout, a national authority on textile testing as related to consumer education, participated in the training program to cover topics in her area of professional interest. As part of her presentation she shopped locally for curtains readily available to residents in project area stores and tested them for colorfastness, strength, flammability, and dimensional stability. She was then able to offer many pointers on price in relation to wear quality that had local relevance. Building on the family assistants' interest in the research-based facts presented, Professor Stout tested children's underclothing that was also purchased in area stores.

Items labeled as preshrunk and washable were intensively washed in the laboratory. The shrinkage after each consecutive laundering was shown visually by mounting items on hardboard and tracing their outlines. The continued reduction in size clearly varied from brand to brand. This demonstration vividly conveyed the importance of reading labels and shopping with certain properties in mind. The graphic examples were used in later training sessions by the on-site teaching staff. Professor Stout and her student assistants also ran laboratory tests on the appearance and durability of children's snow suits following launderings. This research contributed to the effectiveness of teaching. In addition, Professor Stout's students gained some research experience through her work with the project's practical consumer problems.

Professor Stout and Mrs. Regina Rector also presented information on upholstery fabrics, rug care, and stain removal based on laboratory work done especially for the project.

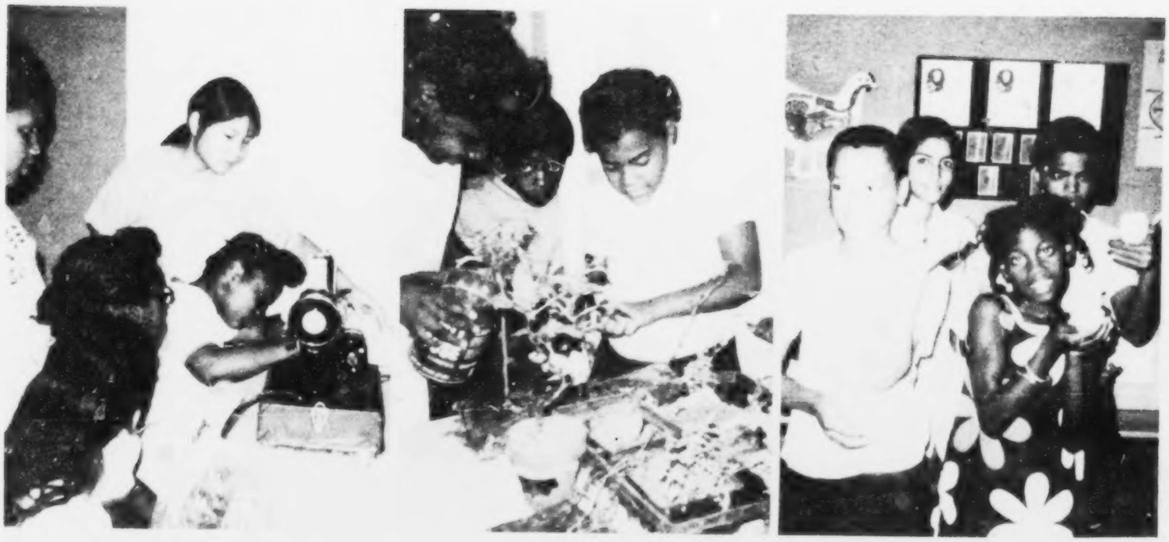
Thesis Research on Change

Mrs. Mildred Konan, a Ph.D. candidate in developmental sociology at Cornell, held one of the graduate assistantships on the project in 1969-70. She had worked on the site during the summer of 1969 as a participant observer, collecting data through informal means for the project. Because of her summer in the community and close affiliation with the project, the project director gave her permission to make a presentation to the family assistants requesting cooperation in her thesis research. Mrs. Konan wished to study the interaction of family assistants and families, especially the extent to which greater frequency of interaction increased the families' knowledge of home management and concern for the community. This research included some interviews with community families as well as family assistants. Interviewing was possible only through the intercession of the family assistants who described the activity to the families and got their consent. This research is summarized in the Supplementary Report No. 4, Paraprofessionals: Planned and unplanned change in a low-income community and in Mrs. Konan's thesis. (19)

4-H EXTENSION: THE YOUTH COMPONENT

The existence of the project in South Brooklyn, with the opportunity it provided for making contacts and trying out ideas, made it the location for other College projects.

Interest in work with area youth was voiced quite early by community members participating in the Cornell-OEO Project. This expression of interest coincided with a long-term desire on the part of College administrators to include a youth component in the project if the opportunity arose. The associate dean for public service and continuing education of the College of Human Ecology and the director of Cooperative Extension recommended action to respond and the dean of the College allocated funds to employ two Cornell students to conduct a youth program during the summer of 1969. With funding assured, the way was open for Ithaca 4-H staff to discuss specific activities with the Cornell-OEO staff and other people in the South Brooklyn community.



Community youth were enthusiastic about the summer program

Preliminary Planning Discussions

A 4-H Extension leader, James Spero, went to South Brooklyn in April, 1969 for discussion with the Cornell-OEO staff and leaders of other community agencies. He described programs based on 4-H materials that had interested boys and girls in urban areas in Westchester, Nassau, and Suffolk counties. These suggestions seemed to get a good reception and strong interest was evidenced. Most social and educational programs for youth in the area were run by the Colony-South Brooklyn Neighborhood Houses, Incorporated, that was also the contracting agency for federal, state, and city programs. The Cornell-OEO director was a former Colony House program director so there were close ties and rapport between the two groups. It was agreed that Colony House would provide an appropriate setting and that a new organizational structure was unnecessary.

The Cornell-OEO Project staff made a formal request to the state 4-H office for a youth program to be a component of the project. Cornell-OEO was administratively responsible for the 4-H youth program which was run for two successive summers in 1969 and 1970 in conjunction with the summer day camp program of the Colony-South Brooklyn Neighborhood Houses, Incorporated.

Program Scope

The first summer, about 100 children aged eight to 13 participated in sessions on sewing, plant science, chick incubation, and embryology.

Classes were held in the Parents' Lounge of Wyckoff Gardens. The second year, cooking, electricity, and woodworking were added to the program. About 150 children aged six to 12 participated in the classes which were held this time in the Community Center of Gowanus Houses with four students in charge. The summer program ended with a field trip to Cornell University for the older children. Both years participant enthusiasm was high but the Cornell students in charge of the classes faced many operational problems such as scheduling, space availability, and equipment. Some of these grew out of the sheer number of youths involved. Others stemmed from last minute changes in plans and human fallibility in the running of the day camp program.

By the middle of the first summer, it was concluded it would be necessary to have a full-time Extension agent in New York City if extension youth programs were to succeed there.

Community Reactions

The 1969 New York City summer program was evaluated by the Community Development Agency as one of the four most outstanding summer programs for young people in the entire New York City area.

In 1970, the parents of the participating children were interviewed to get their reactions to the program. They seemed quite interested and appreciative of the 4-H program. Plants grown and items sewn were brought home. The hatching of chicks was discussed as were portions of the cooking classes. The parents' general attitude seems to have been that the youth needed to be exposed to different kinds of experiences to broaden their horizons. The parents said the information and activity in 4-H was different from that of other groups and their children did not get this type of information in school. The director of the Colony-South Brooklyn Houses was particularly enthusiastic about the field trip to Cornell in 1969, probably because he felt it might awaken the children's interest in going to college. At Cornell, however, some staff felt the children were not old enough to benefit from the trip to the campus.

Through the convergence of several interests, the 4-H division had an opportunity to present its programs in New York City. The Cornell-OEO Project was eager to have a youth component, the community was enthusiastic, and the 4-H staff was interested in working in the city. The project's contacts provided an entree for the 4-H program and helped in communicating with local people about its effectiveness.

Continuing Cooperation

The 4-H Extension staff have continued their involvement in New York City. This has taken the form of the appointment of a full-time Cooperative Extension specialist in the fall of 1970 through whom contacts with other city agencies have been increased. In the urban setting, the emphasis of a 4-H Extension program is on providing "educational experiences and teaching materials to enrich the programs of existing youth agencies" by offering College-prepared materials and short training courses to program leaders rather than on direct administration of youth programs.

BASIS FOR FUTURE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION EFFORTS

The long-term value of the project to both the College and the South Brooklyn community was indicated toward the end of the project by Miss Lucinda A. Noble, associate dean for public service and continuing education, College of Human Ecology, Cornell University.

> The experience and insights gained from the Cornell-OEO Project have been invaluable to members of administration who have provided counsel on other projects in the state such as Turnkey projects in Rochester and Albany and the total development of the expanded nutrition education program in the state. Of particular value was the experience of recruiting, training, and employing paraprofessionals as part of a teaching team.
>
> It is hoped that the Cornell-OEO Project in South Brooklyn can be the beginning of a Cooperative Extension Office--operating in much the same way as Extension offices operate in counties upstate. This would mean that there would be cooperative funding from local and state sources, as well as federal. It would also mean that a local advisory board would advise the staff on program scope and priorities with input from the New York State College of Human Ecology and the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. A continuing effort will be made in this direction for the year 1971-72.

The Cornell-OEO Project has provided several spin-off efforts both for the South Brooklyn Community and for Cooperative Extension work. When the College and New York City Extension staff were exploring possible locations and sponsoring groups to establish expanded nutrition education efforts, South Brooklyn's Colony House was selected. This in large measure was due to the rapport and respect accorded the Cornell-OEO staff.

CORNELL PERSONNEL - PROJECT STAFF INTERACTION

1969	Persons Involved	Occasion
March	Albert Harris, Jr. Suzanne Matsen Mary O'Neal (GW)	Conference with college personnel from subject matter departments in Ithaca
April	James Spero (C)	Talked to Wave I class about 4-H and possibility of youth program
	Cory Millican (C) and two students	Visited trainee homes as prearranged
	Cynthia Burton (C)	Observation and planning for training sessions with family assistants
	Paula Eisner (C)	Visited project for observation Wave I training - infant behavior
	Regina Rector (C)	Wave I training - floor coverings and furniture
	Janice Woodard (C)	Wave I training - storage devices
	Elizabeth Wiegand (C)	Wave I training - money management
	Lisle Carter (C)	Visited project in capacity of Vice President for Social and Environmental Studies
May	Lucinda Noble (C) and others	Graduation Wave I
	Albert Harris, Jr. Suzanne Matsen	Seminar about project in Ithaca - Dept. of Human Nutrition and Food
June	Evelyn Stout (C) Regina Rector (C)	Shopping for fabrics with family assistants
	Suzanne Matsen Constance Mackey (GW)	Conference with participating members of faculty on plans for second training session
July-Aug.	James Spero (C)	4-H summer program
	Cheryl Casselberry (C)	4-H summer program - science education, sewing
	Theodolph Jacobs (C)	4-H summer program - science education

1969	Persons Involved	Occasion
July	Rose Steidl (C)	Visited project for observation and help with community problems
	Mary Purchase	Visited project for observation and ideas for future projects
	Paula Eisner (C)	Wave II training - child development
	Janice Woodard (C)	Wave II training - storage devices
	Evelyn Stout (C)	Wave II training - removal of stains
	Regina Rector (C)	Wave II training - care of textiles and upholstery
	Cory Millican (C)	Wave II training - utilization of space, buying furniture
	Albert Harris, Jr. Dorothy Small Constance Mackey (GW) Saundra Rivera (FA) Jean Sutherland (FA) Sonia Velez (FA)	International-Intercultural Conference at Cornell
	Carlton Wright	Visited family assistants' class
Aug.	Dean Knapp (C) Lucinda Noble (C)	Assemblywoman Connie Cook visited project
	Edward Smith (C)	Graduation Wave II
Oct.	Benjamin Erlitz (C) Katherine Evans (C) Ronda Kotelchuck	Graduate students served as housing consultants
	Suzanne Matsen Merian Wigfall (FA)	Nutrition Education Conference at Cornell
	Margaret Gaffney (C)	In-service training - educational opportunities
	Albert Harris, Jr. Phyllis Morgenlander (FA) Gloria Harewood (FA)	Participation on panel in Ithaca on housing problems - Prof. Feldman's class, "Perspectives on Poverty" (Linda Lavine in charge)
	Albert Harris, Jr.	Spoke to Dean's class - "Man and Contemporary Society"
	Constance Mackey (GW) Joyce Shorter (GW)	Conference on educational materials for low-income families at Cornell, run by Marian Kira

1969	Persons Involved	Occasion
Oct.	Marjorie Washbon (C)	Wave III training - food and nutrition
	Lucy Wood (C) (counselor) and others	Visited project for observation
Nov.	Jean McLean (C)	Sewing workshop - three sessions
	Virginia Peart (C)	Wave III training - care of floors
	Evelyn Stout (C)	Wave III training - inexpensive curtains
	Jean Rector (C)	Wave III training - childrens' clothing
	Dalton Jones (C)	Wave III training - problems of Puerto Rican and black children
	Eleanor Macklin (C)	Wave III training - discussion on teenagers
	Cory Millican (C)	Wave III training - utilization of space, buying furniture
Dec.	Marcena Ver Ploeg Monroe County Extension Home Ec.	Wave III training - money management
1970		
Jan.	Students from Prof. Harold Feldman's class (C) "Perspectives on Poverty"	Visited project site
	Helen Nelson (C) Bettie Lee Yerka (C)	Leaders on Nutrition Education Program from Cornell visited project
Feb.	Cory Millican (C)	Wave I & II in-service training
	Marian Kira (C)	Visited project for observation
March	Jean McLean (C) Evelyn Stout (C) Regina Rector (C) Helen Nelson (C) Virginia Peart (C) Margaret Gaffney (C) Elizabeth Wiegand (C)	Meeting of key staff and faculty who had visited project
	Suzanne Matsen Albert Harris, Jr. Evelyn Bayo (GW) Santia Ruiz (EA) Dorothy Small (RA)	Report on project to college faculty meeting

1970	Persons Involved	Occasion
March	Carmen Betty (FA) Pat Herbert (FA) Louise Reid (FA)	Report on project to college faculty meeting (continued)
April	Evelyn Stout (C)	Reported to Brooklyn staff and family assistants on testing of garments purchased
May	Dean Knapp (C) and others	Graduation Wave IV
June	John Sterling (C) George Broadwell (C) Roger Murphy Carlton Wright	Visited project
July-Aug.	May Eng (C) Raymond Brown (C) Sonia Lopez (C) Denise Meridith (C)	Student leaders for 4-H summer youth program arranged by James Spero
July	Albert Harris, Jr. Les Wright (GW) Gladys Lee (FA) Janet Ocean (FA) Mary Williams (FA) Mary Wood (FA)	Participation in panel for Suzanne Matsen's class - "Consumer Education in Inner City Programs" and Robert Babcock's class - "Rehabilitating the Culturally Disadvantaged"
	Brooklyn Staff	
Aug.	Rosemary Colding Martha Huntley Janet Ocean Jean Sutherland Annie Talley Rosalie Waithe Sadie Weems Mary Williams Phyllis Morgenlander Mr. Green Les Wright Dorothy Small Albert Harris, Jr. Bea Myers Headstart Margaret Smith Senior Citizens	Family assistants' vacation trip to Ithaca -- OEO picnic, Taughannock Park 8/19/71

1970	Persons Involved	Occasion
	Cornell Staff	
Aug.	Natalie Crowe Margaret Gaffney Lucinda Noble Helen Pai Regina Rector Ethel Samson James Spero Lois Stilwell Jean McLean James Spencer Cory Millican Edward Ostrander Martha Cheney	Family assistants' vacation trip to Ithaca -- OEO picnic, Taughannock Park 8/19/71
Sept.	James Spero (C)	Reported on summer program to staff
Fall	Lucinda Noble (C)	Talked to Cornell seminar in developing sociology about project
	Margaret Harding (C)	Article about project research in Human Ecology Forum
	Jane Knitzer (C)	Visited project frequently regarding future proposal
1971		
March	Albert Harris, Jr.	Attended In-Depth Week at Cornell for Extension staff
April	Albert Harris, Jr.	Spoke to monthly meeting of Extension Club at Cornell
	Albert Harris, Jr.	Spoke in Rochester at N.Y.S. Home Economics Association

C - Cornell
GW - Group Worker
FA - Family Assistant
RA - Research Associate
EA - Extension Aide

IX. PROJECT ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

In order to carry on the service activities of the project, an organization strong enough to function under ambiguous and stressful circumstances had to be created. The decision to set up a completely independent organization rather than to try and become a new service attached to an existing organization necessitated providing for all the administrative functions usually termed "staff" duties.

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS AND CHALLENGES

The staff duties included policy formation, financial administration, personnel administration (including recruiting, job description, training, and evaluation), intrastaff communication, and community relations. Though not itemized in the director's job description these tasks were his responsibilities. He had one Spanish-speaking secretary to help with the details of administration. All the rest of the key staff had broad and loosely defined service, training, and research assignments described in the appropriate sections of this report. The organization chart and complete roster of project employees appear in Appendix A.

While administrative functions are fundamentally much the same in all organizations, some of the conditions under which they had to be carried out in this project contributed to interpersonal tension.

Some of the problems in administration of the project are discussed here not in the spirit of criticism, but in the hope of helping future project planners to anticipate and prepare to live with the reality of urban life.

In general, the director's policy was to make those accommodations needed to minimize difficulties while the temporary project was in operation. However, in his recommendations for future project planning the director indicated that he preferred certain solutions to some problems other than those used in this project.

Some aspects of the project that required administrative attention and adaptation throughout the entire life of the project were the newness and temporary nature of the project, space availability, language barriers, role ambiguity, the need to reconcile service and research demands, and the constant requirement of community relations.

PHASES CHARACTERIZED BY PRIMARY ACTIVITY

The project history can be divided into four major phases or time periods, each with distinct objectives, concrete achievements, and explicit problems. Problems are discussed in relation to periods when they required a great deal of attention.

Definition of Four Phases

The first phase was the period from January 1, 1969 to mid-March, 1969. This was a tooling-up and launching phase in which the major tasks were finding key staff and space in addition to establishing confidence, credibility, and working relations with existing community groups.

In the second phase, mid-March, 1969 to May, 1970, the focus was on training of paraprofessionals as well as initiating and providing service to community families. It was marked by rapid organizational growth from a key nucleus of six and a secretary in early March, 1969 to a maximum size of almost 50 employees in May, 1970. This period was one of stress, with intervals of excitement and disappointment. The staff clearly recognized these problems and mistakes, realizing that some had to be endured.

The third phase, from May, 1970 to December, 1970 was one of problem solving through innovative solutions and relative stability of size. As solutions were found to some of the administrative problems, the director was freed for more activity involving community organization.

The fourth and final phase ran from January, 1971 to June, 1971. The emphasis was on preparing participants to move into other jobs, to increase their feeling of worth, competence, and confidence as job candidates and community citizens. Effort was also devoted to consolidating community work that might have some lasting effect following termination of the project.

In the first phase, major attention was given to establishing strong community relations in accordance with both the proposal mandates and the director's perception of priorities.

> One of the determining factors for the development of the project purpose and objective is the introduction and establishment of a working relationship with and within the community. The length of time needed to accomplish this is uncertain. (26, p. 10)

The project director noted in the first six-month report, June, 1969 that:

> The overriding goal of the project was to develop a working partnership with a low-income community that would at one and the same time benefit the community and fulfill the objectives of the project. (27, p. 2)

Other staff members learned to be sensitive to the need for cooperative relationships with other groups and to avoid creating unnecessary rivalries by duplicating existing services.

Pressure to Demonstrate Credibility

The director's previous affiliation with one of the major local organizations, and his generally cordial personal relationships with community people, made it possible for him to move more rapidly than an outsider through this initial period of getting acclimated to the area. During the early period key staff felt it was important to begin the active training and service phase quickly. There were two main pressures moving the staff in this direction. The first was the need to demonstrate to the community that a number of local women really would be employed. Later, this objective seemed to have been more appealing than the educational goals of the project. The second was the need to demonstrate to the New York State Office of Community Affairs that in spite of delay in contract signing, it was possible for a college-sponsored project to have something tangible to show within the budget year. In retrospect, both the director and the assistant director felt that the preparatory period should have been longer. The director was well acquainted with the community, but there was much to learn about working with the academic bureaucracy on financial administration and program requirements. Everyone involved in project conception had underestimated the time and energy required to set up the administrative routines of a entirely new organization staffed almost completely by paraprofessionals with limited work experience in service organizations. The director had headed new programs in other agencies previously, but in each of those situations the administrative framework already existed and the operation was ongoing. An attempt was made to stay "loose" as the organization developed, and to avoid setting up unnecessary or unduly elaborate procedures. However, certain minimum routines were essential for the project to function. The assistant director felt that more time to talk to community people at the beginning would have enabled her to make the training more relevant to the local situation. The realities of operating in the city brought irritations when furniture delivery and telephone installation were delayed, but these were minor problems in the long run.

The decision to move rapidly into operation prevented the key staff from having time to get well acquainted with each other and to become familiar with the project goals and administrative routines.

During an interview in February, 1970, the project director made these comments.

> I think it's necessary if we're talking about giving college personnel, or staff responsible for programs some ideas, one of the main things is that you hire staff and get them together almost a month or maybe two months prior to the program's getting started. They should get to know each other and go over the proposal and get to know what they're doing quite well. You should give them notice that the program won't pay for (certain things). And then there's the idea of policy, supervisory training, if they're working with aides . . .
>
> . . . This period would have been especially good for the group worker. The group worker was the backbone for our program . . . they were supervisors . . . If you have strong ones, you have a strong program and if you have weak ones you have problems. I think if we had had something like a training program or a little sensitivity session--you know, really get to know each other--we would have found out just what our group workers were all about. Could they handle certain situations? Knowing this, I would have geared some of the work, the assignments differently.

Administration of Fringe Benefits

With the beginning of phase two, in mid-March, 1969, the key staff plunged right into selection and training of paraprofessionals. The director participated in several class sessions during the first week of training to explain relationships between the project, the College, and the OEO sponsors. He covered the forms that had to be filled out to comply with personnel requirements of the state college, the deductions that would be made from paychecks, and the fringe benefits. In addition, he had to arrange for Cornell to deposit money in a local bank in order to get the bank to agree to cash paychecks. Negotiation with the Social Services Department was necessary on behalf of those trainees who were welfare recipients. Special arrangements had to be made for payment of baby-sitting money in the absence of free day care facilities. Because rent in low-income public housing is linked by formula to income, including baby-sitting money in the paycheck might have raised the family assistant's rent. Family assistants were reluctant to jeopardize their arrangements with the housing administration for employment in a temporary project. In addition, the baby-sitting money would not have increased her usable income.

COMMUNICATION

Communication among staff members at the beginning of this period was informal and spontaneous. The director knew most of the first group of trainees and they did not hesitate to approach him personally. Arrangements could be made to accommodate individual requests fairly easily. With the rapid growth of the staff, special arrangements to accommodate individual's working hours or meeting times became less and less feasible.

The key staff was in constant informal communication but weekly staff meetings became the formal means for short- and long-term planning, trying out ideas, holding policy discussions, and coordinating of scheduled events to avoid conflicts. However, they were not often used for actual decision making. Tentative plans were discussed to provide the director with reactions before he made decisions, but these ideas were sometimes taken as decisions and leaked to family assistants, who at times became unduly concerned about issues or actions that were never to materialize. A major point was made of holding family information confidential, but there was no tradition strong enough to require confidential treatment of staff meeting information.

An additional communications activity started in January, 1970, in the form of monthly meetings of the entire staff that included all three waves of family assistants. These meetings were used to report on special topics, to discuss plans for community improvement efforts, and to announce project policy or plans. One of the purposes was to bring together all groups as one staff to head off rivalry that was beginning to cause hard feelings between the most recently trained group and those who had been in from the beginning and regarded themselves as founders of the project and entitled to special recognition or privileges.

For the duration of the project communication depended on face-to-face, word-of-mouth exchanges. A shortcoming of oral communication is that rumors could be spread easily and were difficult to stop. Distortions crept into even official communications. The director found that a general memo simply would not be given serious attention by individuals, though a personal letter addressed to a family assistant might be.

Administration and the Language Barrier

Lack of personnel with proficiency in both English and Spanish was a constant problem in project administration as well as in teaching and service. Only two key staff members were truly proficient in both languages. In their cases there was little possibility of failure to understand or to be understood. But the other Spanish-speaking key staff members were more proficient in Spanish than English. Persons in these translator roles held informal power positions because their interpretation of project policies, plans, and the intentions of the other key staff members would be what family assistants would hear. This situation gave the translator a personal following as a communication link. This type of clique formation apparently occurred in some instances and created power centers that made overall administration more difficult. As a group, the Spanish-speaking key staff members had very different political outlooks and were not in themselves a clique. The need for a Spanish-speaking interpreter was genuine at times, but at other times it may have been exaggerated to maintain control.

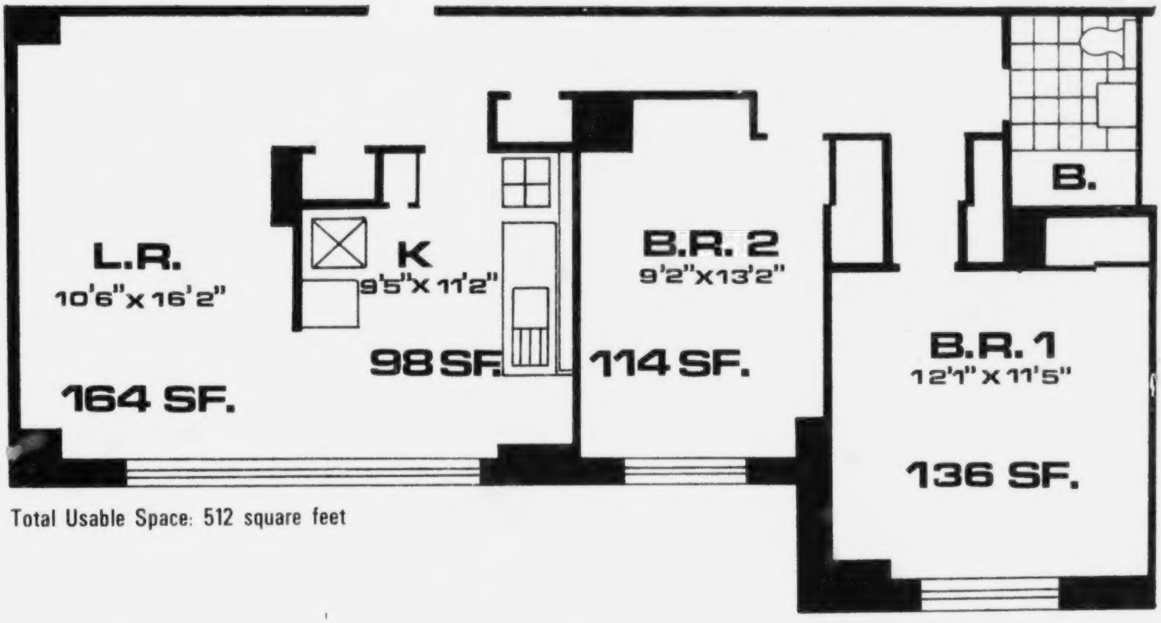
Encouragement of Free Expression

There were times when it was considered important to encourage the more timid family assistants to speak freely. If key staff members attended meetings, their presence inevitably had a somewhat inhibiting effect. The director noticed this when he attended community meetings with family assistants, even though he encouraged them to speak for themselves. When decisions were made not to allow key staff to attend project meetings such as sensitivity or leadership training sessions, it was because freedom of expression was given higher priority than accuracy of translation.

SPACE

During the second phase, lack of space in which to run the organization became an urgent problem. Renting the apartment in Wyckoff Gardens had many advantages and permission to use it for training was regarded as a stroke of good fortune. As a teaching apartment, it had the advantages of convenience of location, security, reasonable cost, high status, satisfactory maintenance, and similarity of equipment and floor plan to many of the family assistants' and families' apartments. The living room, furnished with two large tables pushed together, straight chairs, and bulletin boards, was a good size for a class of eight to 12, with two to five staff, guests, and/or observers. The kitchen was small for more than two or three persons at a time. The single sink, stove, and refrigerator restricted total class participation and had to be used by taking turns. This arrangement may have limited the "teach-back" method that the assistant director felt should have been used more frequently.

FIGURE 1



Total Usable Space: 512 square feet

FLOOR PLAN OF TEACHING APARTMENT

Activity in the offices was distracting to classes or meetings because of the apartment's open floor plan. Even a partition between entry and living room might have cut off some of the noise and visual distraction when people came to the door. Ordinary conversation in the back rooms was clearly audible in the living room.

Space Inadequate for Multiple Project Functions

The major space problems came from the apartment's use as general activity center for the whole project. One bedroom, equipped with files, telephone and desks, became an office used by the secretary and the assistant director. The second bedroom, also office-equipped with two desks and eventually a second telephone, was the only place for a conference or interview when the living room was in use for a class or meeting. At maximum, the six key staff using this office included four group workers, the extension aide, and the research associate. Such close quarters made it almost impossible to avoid territorial encroachments and friction. There literally was no place to work if all these staff were there at the same time, so hours were staggered.

This situation created difficulties in cooperation, since particular key staff were not available when needed.

Since the teaching apartment was the organization's home base, family assistants came to the office for help. They talked to whomever was there about their concerns, not realizing that this might be regarded as interference that would cause resentment if the person consulted forgot to tell the family assistant's group worker. Service effectiveness was at times curtailed because there was no space where a group worker could have regular conferences with family assistants. Neither did the setting encourage the family assistants to stop in before starting to work each day to talk things over.

The family assistants had no room they could consider their headquarters, but had to share the same rooms used by everybody else. Therefore, they could not be encouraged to spend much time at the office except when they were included in planning sessions. They were expected to come in if they needed help or wanted to pick up pamphlets or recipes to give to families. The family assistants within each training group got to know each other during class sessions and in-service sessions, but saw little of each other afterward. They seldom saw family assistants from other classes except at large meetings, workshops, or receptions. The first group of 12 used a closet to collect clothes for distribution to poor families, and in other ways seemed to feel very much at home in the apartment. To some extent, this was true of the second group, also. It was less and less possible for subsequent groups to consider the apartment theirs. By the summer and fall of 1970, when 37 family assistants were employed, it was unrealistic to suggest that they all come to the apartment regularly. The rapid addition of personnel without corresponding addition of space was probably a detriment to development of total group unity.

Anticipating space problems, the director began looking for additional office space in the area soon after the project started, but the investment in security measures that would have been required in a storefront were prohibitive for short-term use. Finally, in July, 1970, during the third phase, the problem was eased by moving the director's office from Park Place in Manhattan to a second floor office on Hoyt Street, a few blocks from the demonstration apartment, in the same building with a program affiliated with Colony House. This move made the director more accessible, it saved him time in transit, and permitted more effective work with other community groups.

The research associate had already been moved to the Manhattan office part time, where space, telephone, a typewriter, and typist were available. The moving to Hoyt Street made it possible to have some family assistants assigned to work with her. However, she still had to spend some time at the apartment to avoid losing touch completely with data collection.

For meetings involving more than 20 people, and activity such as workshops where more than six or eight people worked on individual activities, space had to be rented in one of the churches, the neighborhood house, or the housing projects. Though this meant spending a lot of time taking equipment back and forth and resulted in dispersing the staff, it may have increased the project's visibility. When the research staff from Ithaca came to visit, working space had to be found and staff time made available.

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

The rapid growth of the organization during phase two made personnel administration a primary function of the project director. He was able to turn some of this activity over to the assistant director only during phase three when the constant pressure of training activity was eased. All key staff participated in the selection and evaluation of family assistants, as described in Chapter IV. Project rules about sick leave, vacation pay, and health insurance were all subject to College policy for nonacademic full- and part-time employees. How strictly the rules were enforced was up to the director. The larger the staff became, the more necessary it was to administer rules equitably. The special adjustments that had been made at first were no longer possible. There were vacation days for the whole project that did not appear on the University calendar. Malcolm X's birthday and the period between Christmas and New Year's when children were on vacation, the whole project was closed. Personnel practices became a constant preoccupation. Routines had to be worked out with the Cornell business office so that the family assistants could get their checks promptly. Perhaps the most controversial personnel policy was a decision to deduct family assistants' pay if they did not submit family visit reports promptly or if they did not appear at required meetings. This was first announced in February, 1970, was actually put into effect several months later, but was enforced on only a few occasions.

In a broader sense, the director was responsible for staff morale and for supervision and in-service training of the key staff. He was conscious of the rise and fall of morale, and associated it with periods of intense activity, which tended to be exciting and purposeful, followed by slack periods when continuation of the project was doubtful. He relied heavily on setting short-term recognizable goals, such as workshops with an upper limit of three months followed by a special event. To the outside observer the number of special events, such as picnics and receptions, seemed excessive. But the director found this sort of special occasion provided motivation and stimulation that was a useful managerial technique. One of the major problems in the second phase was supervision. It was so critical that it will be discussed separately later.

POLICY-MAKING MACHINERY

The transition from phase two to phase three was accompanied by a crisis that tested the project's ability to survive and provides the best available example for discussion of policy making within the project. From the beginning, the family assistants and some of the group workers expressed their dissatisfaction with the official goals of the project, feeling that the community had higher priority problems than home management and consumer affairs. The response of College administration, political figures, and project director has been described in earlier chapters.

The policy-making function and mechanics, other than personnel policy, were never clearly defined. The general objectives were determined by the agreement between the OCA and the College and the very general language of the state legislation authorizing the project. Within the contract there was room for either broad or narrow interpretation of the kind of service the family assistants could provide in the name of the project, and the amount of project time that could be devoted by staff at all levels to activities not directly related to home management and consumer education.

The director was in frequent touch with the associate dean for public service and continuing education. Commenting on the relationship between the on-site administration and the College administration's coordinator, the project director stated:

> I think it was a very good relationship because we didn't know what we wanted or where we were going and Cornell gave us a free hand to find out. I think they weren't aware of some of the externals--what was happening in the community, and as a result said, "Al, go ahead and run a program - We'll back you." They never came down saying, "You can't do this, you can't do that." We had very good rapport, and that was between Cindy [the associate dean for public service and continuing education] and myself. Director Smith and the College dean were involved but I had all my dealings with Cindy. It was a matter of a memo, or I would just pick up the phone and say, "Cindy, try this on for size," and nine-tenths of the time she'd say, "Go ahead, Al," and she'd give me a suggestion. It was a great relationship.

There was no local governing board to whom policy questions could be submitted, and no advisory group other than the staff and family assistants themselves.

Speaking about program direction and policy, the project director noted in the same interview:

> It was a new organization and I think Cornell was smart. They tread light. They didn't want to upset the applecart by putting restrictions on programs. They gave us enough line . . . "Do what you have to do." That's why I'm saying, I don't know if the same effect would come about now because Cornell has learned certain things. You can see the result of Cornell-OEO in the organizational and managerial structure of the nutrition program in New York.
>
> . . . I think in a new program the on-site administration (or board) would have more influence . . . The next logical step is to have a community board. The community is getting more sophisticated and anybody, Cornell, or any institution, coming into the community now, is going to have to give the community some say . . .

During the first phase, this kind of policy making was not an issue. The assistant director for training assumed that family assistants would be helping families by telling them about resources; therefore, she planned the first training course to include appearances by several agency representatives.

Evolution of Service Policy

The decision to spend most of the time on personal service and expediting with persons who did not appear to be much interested in consumer education was not a clearly defined and announced decision. It evolved from the experience of group workers and family assistants who approached families and found that people who were relatively immobilized, like the elderly, or overwhelmed by problems they could not cope with, were the most interested in having their services. By the time it was recognized as a clear-cut pattern of service, many of the family assistants felt they had made commitments to the families they were helping and did not know how to discontinue unproductive work without feeling guilty or having the family feel angry at being abandoned. Family assistants realized they really did not know how to steer a relationship toward teaching home management material if the family was not already interested. In each group of family assistants a few women readily performed the teaching role. They tended to work mostly with families they already knew, or families who had heard of them and their training. These few did a lot of informal teaching from the first.

Not only did the family assistants feel that expediting was the most useful thing family assistants could do, but also the group workers on the whole during phasetwo felt much the same as this quote by one of them which appeared in the June, 1970 Semiannual Report.

> I feel that home management and consumer education in any low-income community is a big farce; they manage better than most middle-class families could manage with so small an income. (27, p. 16)

Shift Toward Emphasis on Education

It was not until early in 1970 that the director felt he could insist upon a shift away from personal service and expediting and toward more teaching of home management and consumer topics. The immediate effect was on one-to-one contacts, but it also was reflected in an increase in teaching in group settings. This was a major policy change and has been referred to in the discussion of roles of family assistants and families served. It is worth examining from the standpoint of how it came about, the upheaval it caused, and the survival of the organization. Evaluation of an organization can be made in terms of how it weathers a storm and this was a real test. (33) Why the director felt it was necessary is not entirely clear. Probably this can be put down to a political sixth sense. By the winter of 1969-70, the director and key staff were acutely aware that the end of the project was not too far off and that any extension of this project or funding of a new project would depend on satisfactory completion of the terms of the current project and continued interest on the part of the College. In addition, there had been visits by state "program auditors" that the Ithaca research staff did not learn about until much later. There was some recognition that many of the family problems with which family assistants were trying to help were of long standing and totally beyond their capacity or that of any single individual to alleviate. Moreover, by this time the director recognized that only a few of the family assistants had the leadership skills necessary to realize their social action goals even if outside support could be found. All of these considerations and probably others had a part in his decision to employ, as the group worker for the fourth class of family assistants, a man whose specialty was leadership training for community action. Simultaneously, there were efforts to tighten up on accounting for time, but the major decision to shift the focus of service did not go into effect for several weeks. It precipitated the resignations of the three young women who had been group workers for the first three groups and led to some stormy sessions in which strong feelings about the focus of service got thoroughly confused with differences of opinion about appropriate relationships between family assistants and supervisor.

There were several results. By the end of July there were two group workers instead of four for the four groups of family assistants so there had to be some regrouping. The family assistants had formed a grievance committee and established its right to meet regularly with the director. The focus of service did change, by dropping work with some of the multiproblem families and by not taking on any more for prolonged service. Perhaps most important, the project had demonstrated that it had enough internal strength to survive a crisis. With this crisis behind him, with two group workers willing to assume supervisory roles, and with the assistant director taking over some of the details of personnel administration, the director was more free to carry out the community organization tasks that he felt should have high priority if any of the project's efforts in the area were to survive.

This crisis provided examples of techniques for intrastaff communication. Most aspects of the new emphasis were discussed in a key staff meeting, repeated in distorted ways by key staff members to friends among the family assistants, and finally announced to the whole staff. Loyalties were tested, cliques were strengthened, and new perspectives emerged as the director maintained his position. After several sessions, with the day-to-day support of most of the remaining key staff and the backing of the College administration, equilibrium was restored.

Project Staff - College Administration Communication for Long-Range Planning

Long-range planning and major decision making usually called for "summit" meetings, especially when funding for the following year was involved. Some meetings were held in New York City and several in Ithaca for consultation between project director and College administrators. Depending on the topic of discussion, these sessions sometimes included the assistant directors and additional key or research staff. Once the New York and Ithaca staff were well acquainted, they made frequent use of the telephone. This communication line saved many trips.

SERVICE-RESEARCH RECONCILIATION

The need to reconcile action and research activity required constant attention. This theme had lower priority than did policy issues on program direction. Both the director and assistant director for training and service were conscious of the obligation to have a research component and believed the College administration was strong in their support of this research activity. Operating in the community, they were sensitive to the objections of the family assistants as described in the discussion on hostility to research. Like anyone else, key staff had some self-consciousness about being the subjects of research and having their work evaluated by people who were not fully familiar with the pressures or constraints under which they were working. They were familiar with the educational model of before-and-after testing but had not worked with it in the context of social action research. They found the research activity very difficult to explain to family assistants or others in the community. The general research approach outlined in the proposal had to be repeatedly revised in light of the circumstances. Therefore, no clear-cut research design could be developed and distributed to the on-site staff. The research strategy that was adopted is discussed in Chapter X.

No member of the on-site staff was really in charge of planning research and able to explain it in a reassuring and convincing way. Because the main research staff was in Ithaca, the on-site staff were often in the position of having to defend the existence of the research component in the day-to-day operation of the project. They had to insist upon compliance with some of the requests for information, and occasionally to arrange for interviews with a research staff member. Often they were not too sure of their own belief that this request was more important than other duties. The pressures created by the Ithaca research staff's requests for up-to-date records or supplementary information occasionally caused unnecessary friction when the distinction between the essential and optional data requests were not made clear to the on-site research associate. This was especially true when the group workers felt they were being by-passed by the on-site research associate's efforts to get reports from family assistants. The group workers were supposed to be directly in charge of family assistants and resented it when they believed their supervisory authority was being ignored. They were in a position to hasten or impede data collection.

The training and service program itself was not determined by research considerations. Given the circumstances, there was no attempt to set up control groups, to have a uniform program for all training groups, nor to attempt standardization of service activity. As has been amply documented, uniqueness of approach based on individual differences in paraprofessionals and in the families with whom they worked revealed distinguishable patterns but was not a constant treatment in the traditional research sense. On the contrary, it was expected that short-term recommendations on the basis of findings would be put into effect immediately. The director found some of the work of the research staff helpful, especially development of application interview forms, a survey of wages paid visiting homemakers in other projects, and a project in which residences of family assistants and families served were put in graphic form on maps, thereby showing areas in the community not yet touched by the project.

Research Cooperation Has Low Priority

There was no doubt that most of the on-site staff regarded research activity as of lower priority than service to families, and data collection a nuisance. Most of the family assistants and some of the key staff were inclined to think of it as a separate activity, not realizing that there was no research other than that having to do with the actual operation of the project. At the close of the project, the director felt that in future projects the family assistants should be trained as research aides as well as family assistants, as a means of integrating the service and research function. The family assistants found fact-finding in price and housing surveys to be an interesting and worthwhile activity. But the distant Ithaca-based research operation that requested visit reports on their families was never viewed by the family assistants as comparable to these relatively unemotional activities. The director felt the intensity of the family assistants' objections to research had been greatly reduced during the final year of the project. The on-site research associate had the difficult task of providing liaison between the Ithaca research staff and the reluctant data collectors. The actual research plans and execution had to be changed as project developments dictated or permitted, so a number of preconceived ideas on how the research operation would work had to be abandoned. It was often a thankless job for the on-site research associate and probably a frustrating one for a person whose training was primarily in educational methods. In addition, it was hard for her to separate the research role from her role as the most able translator on the staff most of the time and therefore the person able to convey ideas to those less fluent in English. The on-site research associate had started as a group worker and had a great interest in the families with whom she and the first family assistants had started to work. She found it hard to turn over this work completely especially with Spanish-speaking people she had helped in rather dramatic circumstances. Later group workers may have felt she was looking over their shoulders evaluating their role performance based on her experience at the project's outset. They may have felt the same sense of "I was here first" that later waves of family assistants felt about the first waves. For whatever reasons, some of the unpleasantness circled around her in the form of open clashes with other staff members and friction about responsibilities.

PROJECT'S TEMPORARY STATUS

The temporary nature of the project cast a shadow over the third phase of the project and dictated activities during the fourth. There was concern and some tension even in the second phase about the future of the project. Some key staff hoped it would be continued intact and others wanted it to continue but in modified form. This was a topic of discussion while the 1970 legislature was in session and there was some doubt about the funding for the third year. In the summer and fall of 1970, the project director, with the help of College staff, spent a lot of time writing drafts of proposals and one was submitted to the legislature. This would have been a much smaller-scale project, concentrating on consumer education and interpreting information about community resources as a type of consumer education. When this proposal was turned down by the 1971 legislature in a budget squeeze which eliminated many high priority services, some staff members began planning realistically for other jobs. Other participants, especially family assistants, clung to the hope that Cornell would, at the last minute, find some way to continue the project in its present form.

The temporary status of the project had had an important influence on many decisions throughout its life. Discussion of the uncertainty of its future brought on periods of low morale.

The overall proposal was a three-year demonstration project, but the funding by the legislature and the contract between the College and the OCA had to be renewed annually. Therefore, no firm commitments could be made for more than a few months at a time. As mentioned in Chapter III, the contract for the first year was signed December 31, 1968, when the fiscal year was six months old; this delay created intense pressure to get the project started quickly. Later, in 1969, when the director was looking for ways to help the community get some of the outside funding needed to start day care facilities, housing projects, etc., it became clear that the role he could play would be that of catalyst. A temporary organization could not realistically be the local sponsor of a long-term project of the type needed. Perhaps more damaging was the constant stress arising from uncertainty. Some of the key staff were acutely conscious of their precarious employment position and with the policy change as a precipitating factor, began looking for other jobs during the second year. Others stayed on, but their minds were on finding other jobs.

The director made several decisions that would have been different in a long-term project. There were some open conflicts between members of the staff and some actions that he regarded as disloyal to the project. If the project had been longer-term or permanent, he stated it would have been necessary to get to the bottom of these problems and correct them regardless of the repercussions. But for the remaining months of the project, he felt it was better to smooth them over, realizing that there was a loss in efficiency and at times lowered morale. Similarly, when asked about the possibility of promoting one of the family assistants to a supervisory position, he felt that the great amount of training and support he would have to give her would not be justified in view of the short time remaining in the project, even though he felt she had the potential for a supervisory position.

The most conspicuous result of the temporary status of the project was that the final six months were devoted almost entirely to "phase-out training." This community leadership training was intended to help the family assistants fit into new jobs and take a more effective community role after the project ended. The director used the time to try to consolidate his community organization efforts so that some permanent community benefit would result from the project's existence. Family assistants were urged to take jobs when they had opportunities; consequently, a substantial part of the director's time went into finding openings for both family assistants and key staff. Family assistants visited families to tell them the project was ending and to try and help them to find other ways to get help or manage on their own.

ROLE AMBIGUITY: FAMILY ASSISTANT'S AND GROUP WORKER'S

Ambiguity in the roles of staff was a problem that arose partly from the newness of the organization and lack of tradition, partly from the terms of the contract, and in part from the atmosphere surrounding poverty programs. In poverty programs it is not always clear whether the objective is primarily in performing designated duties. The multiple roles of the family assistants have been discussed in Chapter IV. The ambiguity of their roles arose to a great extent from the feeling that the project's priorities were wrong. They felt obligated to try to get Cornell and others outside the area to recognize the urgency of other needs while they simultaneously defended the project when they had a neighborhood audience. At the individual level there was ambiguity arising from their feelings of inadequacy as teachers of unfamiliar subject matter, and their preference for giving other types of help. Generally, ambiguity leads to a degree of conflict, and certain people have greater tolerance for ambiguity than others.

The group workers occupied an even more ambiguous role. They shared the family assistants' general doubts about priorities, but had a supervisory role obligation to the project which required that they not only follow project policy but endorse it and see that family assistants assigned to them adhered to it. Aside from this supervisory obligation, their job duties were ambiguous. There were no good prototypes at hand for the family assistant to use as a model, but there were even fewer guidelines for the group worker. However, there were some elements in their responsibilities that were common to other supervisory positions. Supervision of paraprofessionals is becoming recognized as one of the keys to successful incorporation of family assistants into programs, and a necessity if they are to grow and make maximum use of their capacities. To add to the growing literature the group workers' functions in this project and some of their problems and the director's efforts to help them become more effective are discussed.

It was noted earlier that the director considered them the backbone of the project. As he interpreted the proposal, the position called for "teacher-types" or "social-worker types," so he went to other agencies serving low-income people in the area to get suggestions. The first two group workers selected both had Master's degrees, experience in education, prior work with other poverty projects, along with impressive credentials. The next two were high school graduates with some college training and experience in militant black and Puerto Rican organizations. The fifth one was from an upstate black professional family and was a recent home economics graduate. The first male group worker was a specialist in leadership training for community aides and the next was another male who was working for Education Action, a voluntary educational project attached to Colony House. He had had a year or two of college work.

At first, the director looked primarily at credentials. Later, he decided that credentials meant less than the personal strengths and attitudes needed to do a supervisory job. A procedure was developed for interviewing group worker candidates: first by the director, then the assistant director, and finally by a group of family assistants. The director observed:

> I found that you have to look for a certain type of personality in our program. Some of the people that came on earlier had the credentials. We didn't know what type we were looking for. Some of the things we saw on paper--some of our group workers--were good, and that's what we were looking for, but in reality they couldn't function. It was because of that interpersonal relationship that they couldn't handle or maybe females handling females in a supervisory capacity. It was kind of rough and I found more and more that when I gave them a free hand and said, "Don't back yourself into a corner," I found that they were side-stepping. . . So I was asked to do a group worker's supervisory job because they couldn't handle it.

The group worker position called for playing several different roles--advisor, helper, and trainer for the family assistants but also monitor and taskmaster. In addition, the group worker had a part in project planning, especially in the area of in-service training.

From the director's point of view as an administrator, the group worker's major role was as a first line supervisor, and they should have been able to deal with requests for special treatment such as being excused from meetings or having working hours adjusted in consideration of special family situations. One chronic problem during the second phase of the project was the inability of the group workers to settle routine policy questions of this type before they grew out of proportion. As a result, many details were taken to the director that he felt should have been settled by the group workers at the lower level of administration.

In the third period, the two male group workers were able to handle this kind of problem. The director found it helpful to have males available to help with chores. However, the ability to be a strong supervisor was attributed more to the person's ability to be firm and willingness to assume the role than to his being male. The director concluded that the solution to the problem lay primarily in the choice of persons with appropriate qualities, though he thought a preliminary training period would have helped. He described what he did to try to increase the group workers' effectiveness:

> I was constantly working and our meetings were like training sessions with the group workers--what you should do--be careful of this--you have the authority to deal with this. . . Most of our meetings were training sessions. What finally happened was that group workers began leaving the program . . ."

The director felt some of the group workers who left could have developed into effective supervisors and that one in particular knew how to handle a group, "but I don't think she had the strength to say: 'You do so and so.' You don't have to be authoritarian, but it's the way you say something . . . I don't think she had that way."

The staff's willingness to accept all aspects of their supervisory role is considered by the assistant director:

> We really talked about this nearly a year ago, before the two group workers left because I think we were all concerned and we had a number of sessions, but it was something that never really got resolved. If the program had a weak point, I think the weakest point is the whole thing of roles and supervision. I don't think that that's unique to us because I've worked in different places where supervision is something that nobody likes to do. Sometimes you really have to be a "bad guy." You aren't, but you have to play that role. I don't like it and none of the group workers have liked it. I don't think Al was comfortable with it either, although I suspect of all of us, he's able to do it the easiest.

The family assistants reacted differently to the various supervisors, according to the director:

> I think a lot of it is game playing and it only shows up now that they can work in the world of work and they can come in on time. I think earlier they found out that we had weak links, and they played upon that. It's just nature to do that if they can get away with something . . . They figured, "If I can confront this situation and holler a little louder they're going to change." I think they just used it.

Group Workers in Relation to Services to Families

From the service standpoint the group worker was the person to whom the family assistants had to turn for advice in helping her families, for finding new families, for assistance in locating and contacting agencies, and for moral support in the emotional crises provoked by over-identification with families. He was the person who could initiate in-service training needed to increase the family assistant's skills in approaching families and working with them. He was also the person in the best position to observe any inclination to cultivate excessive dependency and to help family assistants with techniques for terminating contacts, and to help resolve their feelings of guilt for leaving a family. The group workers might have had no better idea than the family assistant of how to solve a drug problem, but he might be more readily able to see that nothing more could be accomplished by repeated visits. In relation to research the group worker was responsible for seeing that reports on services to families were turned in promptly.

The first few group workers tended to become counselors to the family assistants on their own problems, and sometimes to become personal friends outside of office hours. These roles were in keeping with the generally informal atmosphere of the project, but for some women it became impossible to be both a loyal friend and a supervisor who had to hold the family assistant to her work obligations and to impose penalties.

Some of the limitations in the training and supervisory capacities of the group workers were compensated for by having sensitivity training sessions for family assistants in which the trainer tried to help them with conflicts concerning their role expectations and abilities. The sensitivity trainer sometimes talked with the key staff but there was minimal help for them except from the director.

The group workers were responsible to the assistant director for certain kinds of tasks, such as planning workshops, other in-service activities, and accounting for family assistants' time. They could call on her or the home economics aide for help with home management topics, but she was not in a clearly defined position of authority over them.

It is clear that the stress inherent in any supervisory position was aggravated by the ambiguity of both the project and the role. However, the major problem was in the reluctance of the people in the position of group worker to assume supervisory responsibility. There may have been mistakes in assignments, but a temporary project in a given setting does not command unlimited personnel choice. Therefore, a realistic recommendation is to look for people with the potential for supervision and be sure they get adequate training and support. Probably the exact role could not have been outlined explicitly in a new project that expected to change as it learned from experience. However, it is important to look for supervisory attitude, strength under pressure, willingness to follow organization policy and procedures once established, and willingness to accept responsibility.

X. EVALUATIVE RESEARCH

The Cornell-OEO Project was conceived with an evaluative research component designed to contribute to the training-service activity. The major contributions of the research group were to provide reasonably objective information about the impact of the total program and its elements, to offer data that the project administration could use in making decisions about the ongoing program, and to accumulate information that would facilitate understanding the project dynamics and processes in order to provide guidelines for future decision makers.

Role of Research Component

Since the project's existence was primary, at the outset College administration and on-site project leadership recognized that research activity was subordinate to the action side of the project. All other project goals were contingent upon community acceptance coupled with organizational growth and survival.

The research component was intended to play a vital part of the total project, but its contribution, and even its visibility, were minimal during the exhilarating, hectic days that marked the project's emergence in the community. The research group's role was often that of the loyal opposition. This stance was made possible partly by their emotional detachment engendered through distance from the project site. The absence of day-to-day contact with the community pressures and pace of the urban scene also helped provide a measure of objectivity.

These two factors of distance and limited immersion in the project must have been interpreted at times by the on-site staff as barriers to a true understanding of what the project was really like where it made contact with the community.

INITIAL RESEARCH ACTIVITY MINIMAL

Anticipating the obvious demands that "establishing a beachhead" in the community placed on the training-service personnel, the proposal stated that the research activity would be minimal until the emerging organization in South Brooklyn had established an operating routine. In addition, the concept of maximum operating flexibility meant that day-to-day revisions in training and other routines were so commonplace that any effort to attribute an attitudinal or behavioral change to a specific project activity was totally unrealistic. Trainees' reluctance to reveal misunderstanding of ambiguous roles or training content for fear that they might jeopardize their new jobs made valid data gathering unlikely and was another reason the researchers remained in the background.

The atmosphere during the initial training wave was that project success was the goal we were all striving for, therefore, we would have to try alternatives, show patience, and hopefully become less anxious as we got better acquainted with each other and the program.

At this point in the project the research component consisted of the assistant director for research in Ithaca. During the first training wave Professor Manet Fowler, an anthropologist from Syracuse University, joined the project in a consulting capacity to provide the observational monitoring recommended during this period. She talked with staff and trainees to understand the formal and informal tone of the situation. She provided continuity as she represented the research arm of the project in several trips to the site. The assistant director for research participated in the orientation section of the first week of training. His presentation attempted to eliminate fears of research by discussing the research component's fact-finding role to aid the director and assistant director for training. Research was described as a means of fact finding that gives people information they can use to make decisions. Comparison shopping was offered as an illustration of the way everyone gets facts to make better decisions.

But suddenly the trainees began to speak out and the research presentation turned into an emotionally loaded attack on academic researchers snooping in low-income communities, the blatant use of people as guinea pigs, and invasion of privacy. The hostility toward research of which we had been warned as likely in more militant parts of the city was suddenly a reality in the project area.

Resistance to Research and Subsequent Compromises

Before explaining the major arguments against research, an examination of two misunderstandings will help to put the reactions in context.

First, the trainees were making no distinction between social science research that investigated style of life, marital habits, or other very personal topics and evaluative research focused on an educational program's impact and dynamics.

The second misunderstanding pertained to a misreading of the evaluative researchers' sincere desire to discuss topics to be investigated and to arrive at whatever satisfactory compromises were necessary to maintain collaboration with the community. Actually, a "debate" had begun before the question under consideration had been defined.

This kind of heated reaction to threatening or misunderstood activity was a pattern that staff members came to recognize. They also learned that after the initial heat had cooled, the issues could often be discussed openly and amiably. In the orientation mentioned above, the exchange went on for about an hour before winding down for a scheduled coffee break. During the break one of the women who had been most vocal in her challenge to what the university was trying to do, said to the assistant director for research, "You know, you should come down here more often and get to know things." It was a friendly invitation and conveyed clearly that the resistance to research and the apparent animosity were not personal. However, the negative view of research activity revealed in that meeting was not to change overnight and in some cases not at all.

The research staff had been alerted to research hostility by the students supported by FACT funds the previous years. They reported that resistance to academic researchers had been vigorous in East Harlem in the fall of 1967 and spring of 1968. The proposal writers believed, perhaps naively, that the South Brooklyn atmosphere was quite different from East Harlem. They also assumed the evaluative research involved to be neutral, nonthreatening subject matter. In addition, the College expected to go to great lengths to avoid any encroachment on individuals' privacy. In that framework the South Brooklyn trainees' reaction was quite unexpected since project endorsement was assumed to have included the evaluative research as well as the training and service activity.

COMMUNITY BELIEFS ABOUT RESEARCH

An analysis of material from newspapers, the literature, and our own discussions with project staff and community participants helped to make understandable what had happened.

The community's fears and concerns can be summarized in five beliefs about academic researchers:

1) Researchers have ulterior motives that are disguised in their stated purposes.
2) Researchers want guinea pigs to use in finding out the things they want to know.
3) Researchers have no respect for privacy of people they use in their studies.
4) Research cooperation may result in derogatory outcomes that reflect on the community and the individuals or ethnic groups studied.
5) Research cooperation has no tangible payoff for the participating individuals.

Ulterior Motives Ascribed

The belief is strongly entrenched that the stated purpose of most research being done by academic investigators is not the actual use to which the data will be put. This concern is not without foundation since many social scientists feel that to reveal the research focus will influence the way the respondent answers questions. A fiery example of the ulterior motive logic is shown in the *Columbia Daily Spectator* under the headline, "Harlem Committee Attacks Health Survey by Columbia." (31)

> The Harlem Committee for Self Defense last night attacked a health survey of adolescents in Harlem being conducted by Columbia [University], and charged that the results of the survey will "wind

> up in police precincts, not in the halls of the University."
>
> To the cries of "Columbia get the hell out of Harlem" and "this survey is a fraud," the committee questioned the real purpose of the Adolescent Health Project, administered by the School of Public Health, which is sending interviewers to Harlem homes to ask children of twelve to seventeen years about their sexual experiences, their use of drugs, their suicidal tendencies, their participation in race riots, and the type of friends they have, among other things. (31, p. 1)

The hostility met by survey interviewers is described in a New York Times article on a Gallup poll run in Harlem that had to be scrapped because of data falsification.

> The survey, undertaken for The New York Times, dealt with living habits, shopping conditions, housing, confidence in Negro leaders and political attitudes of Harlem residents.
>
> Mrs. Copeland [Gallup supervisor], said two staff members did only one interview apiece in the Harlem survey and then refused to attempt any others because of hostility they encountered.
>
> Dr. Gallup said this was the first time his organization had attempted such a full-scale survey of attitudes in an area like Harlem. He said he had concluded "the difficulties of doing a scientific poll in Harlem are extreme."
>
> He suggested, "a few other ghetto districts might be equally tough," explaining that "the normal living patterns are completely disarranged" and that there was "hostility to anyone who is checking up for any reason."
>
> "These people just have in their minds that if you come and ask a question you are a social worker or someone from the government checking up on them. They're on the defensive. They just don't want to talk to a stranger." (8, p. 33)

Guinea Pig Exploitation

The feeling runs strong that researchers merely want bodies having specified demographic characteristics and that this guinea pig exploitation is an insult to a person's humanity. One of the Cornell-OEO Project training supervisors made these comments in discussing the research resistance issue:

> One of the primary reasons why we had so much resistance in terms of having tapes in the training room also shows up in a lot of other ways. They seem to feel that they are guinea pigs or they are on exhibit. And the data are collected on them. They feel that enough data have been collected on them.
>
> So, when you are making it obvious that research information is being compiled, the fact that it is research and you are saying it is compiled sort of turns them off and makes them very irresponsive in terms of cooperating.

Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich (5) question the university's sincerity and humane concern in their critical discussion of community mental health programs.

> The public can only speculate that, had the black and Puerto Rican community not stood in its way, Columbia would be well on its way to developing a human laboratory for its own research and training priorities with mental health services to the surrounding Washington Heights--West Harlem community running a very poor third. (5, p. 87)

Invasion of Privacy

Lack of respect for people's privacy is a third characteristic attributed to researchers. The quotes by Gallup and the Columbia student article allude to this concern. The Cornell-OEO Project director reflected people's feelings that private information is none of the researchers' business.

> But when researchers come in, you know, asking, "When do you go to the bathroom?" "When do you go to bed?" "When does this happen?" people won't lend themselves. You can find that information right down at the local CPC [Community Progress Corporation] or go down to City Hall. (24, p. 166)

Derogatory Publicity

The fourth belief that has dampened low-income and minority group members' willingness to cooperate with researchers comes from studies such as those allegedly citing evidence of genetically rooted intellectual inferiority of blacks, or the negative influence of family living patterns on children's mental health. Their past experience suggests that the evidence they provide may be used to discredit their community or their ethnic group. Therefore, the best policy is not to provide any information.

Research Does Not Benefit People

The final reason for resistance to research is indirectly related to all the others. The central point is that cooperating with researchers produces no tangible payoffs for the community or the individual. A few years earlier researchers had reported that the chance of helping someone else had been an adequate basis for cooperation.

Testimony from the project's community leadership trainer points up that this barrier to research may become an increasing problem.

> . . . that is spelling out how the data or the information received is not going to be lost somewhere for research. Communities like this one have been researched and researched and have been tapped for all kinds of information. Most of the residents seem to feel that this information gathered somehow never gets back to the community in a constructive way or that they cannot benefit by the information given.

Other Research Related Fears

Two additional factors forced innovations because direct data collection was impossible. Evaluation even of a minimal and flexible nature is almost invariably perceived as a threat even by people who are secure in their positions. This perception was perhaps inevitably heightened by the newness and ambiguity of the roles they had undertaken and their awareness that their past experience and training provided them with but a limited foundation for their new tasks. Under the circumstances in which they were operating, even the professional staff could not avoid the evaluation-fear syndrome.

Finally, family assistants' and group workers' resistance to helping collect data was traceable to service versus research priorities in total project terms. Dealing with a family's urgent problem was harder to postpone than was completion of a data form that the research staff in Ithaca was requesting.

When these community-held attitudes about research are understood, it is easy to see why the research staff's description of the evaluative research mission was looked at with distrust. That the community continued to cooperate with the academically affiliated project involving research for the duration of the undertaking has to be taken as objective evidence of success in making the community-university collaboration work. A broad frame of reference is needed to view projects. Just as the criterion for a good paraprofessional is one who shows up for work regularly rather than the middle class standard of one who possesses a high degree of the requisite skills, so too may we consider cooperative projects against a measure of survival rather than the criteria of success applied in a well controlled laboratory setting.

RESEARCH COMPROMISES

Given the context just described and the goal of gathering as much relevant data as possible to understand the project processes and outcomes, a re-evaluation of the research strategy and mutually acceptable arrangements had to be worked out.

The significance of the compromises are clearer when set against the details of the evaluative research component proposal objectives.

1) To develop criteria of program effectiveness as shown by an increase in level of knowledge, as well as a change of attitude and behavior, on the part of the Teaching Homemakers and their homemaker audience.
2) To devise instruments for measuring the degree to which the criteria of program effectiveness are met.
3) To collect and analyze data on demographic, individual, and situational factors to determine the nature and degree of their association with criteria of program effectiveness.
4) To observe and describe the processes by which program participants work within the program to learn if there are consistencies underlying expected dynamics of change.

The community representatives in the first training wave and the on-site staff felt that no interviewing or attitude and knowledge testing by research staff should be carried out with community residents served, at least in the early stages of the project. However, at this early stage it was agreed that the key staff, consisting of the directors and group workers along with the family assistants, would participate in interviews as respondents.

The question of testing trainees on course content or other topics was left open to discussion with the key staff as the particular topics came up. There was no blanket acceptance or rejection of participation when the discussion was held at the outset of the project. The family assistants did subsequently participate by writing brief essays on training course content, by completing forms covering reactions to their training experience, and by participating in informal interviews.

Data About Families

When the family assistants moved into the community a discussion was held on collecting information about those families being served. Some types of records were needed to understand the work being done with families. The researchers were interested in the number of families involved, type of services being provided, and the kinds of problems that were being confronted.

An agreement about collecting data on families was reached. Anything that the family assistant felt was personal information or that the family had revealed in confidence would not appear in records except in the form of a note reading, "personal matter." No names were put on visit records when the first family visiting was done. This arrangement was impractical in terms of communication and accuracy. Further discussions between on-site staff and family assistants followed. A coding system was developed and each family was given a code number. Though the family's identity was known, this procedure was to guarantee privacy. All research and on-site staff realized the importance of confidentiality of records and files. By the time the project had been going for about three months, the on-site staff was able to vouch for the researcher's credibility and no violations of confidence had occurred so the initial fears were calmed. The research staff were still seen as strangers. Interestingly enough, the only known violation of the confidential nature of the records occurred on the site and did not involve the research staff.

The form that any research data collecting would take was defined through discussion. The community representatives and staff served as gatekeepers in behalf of the community. This arrangement seemed to work out reasonably well. If this agreement had not been honored, it is questionable whether the project could have survived. Credibility would have been destroyed.

Those early agreements eliminated the idea of precise attitude and behavior change measurements. They required a rethinking of the criteria of program effectiveness. The solution took the direction of gathering detailed information on volume of service, type of service, and nature of problems worked with. Attitude scales and test plans were abandoned for self-administered, open-ended questionnaires or observer reports about training. The evidence on community impact would come from visit reports consisting of check lists and brief written comments along with the demographic and other data that would define the population served. Essentially, the program effectiveness measures became how many people were reached and what kinds of service were provided for them. Evidence of teaching and responsiveness to teaching were more precisely coded and analyzed. Since the major project objective was teaching, this material was basic to any discussion of project impact.

The study of process was possible primarily because of the cooperation of the key staff and the willingness of the family assistants to discuss their jobs and concerns. Information was obtained from diaries, interviews, questionnaires, and meetings as well as on-site participant observations. But the bulk of research data collection depended on the day-to-day visit report.

By the end of the project, the volume of data that the staff and family assistants had provided was extensive and permitted considerable useful analyses.

Research Administration

Hostility toward research was not the only obstacle. In view of the shortage of trained research personnel available and the lack of a close relationship between program and research design, many compromises had to be made in arrangements for staffing, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

STAFFING THE RESEARCH COMPONENT

Initially, the staffing plan was to find a full time resident research associate at or near the Ph.D. level in anthropology, sociology, or psychology, with experience in low-income programs or evaluative research. The research associate was to be in charge of overall conceptualization of the research, development and use of instruments for measurement of short- and long-term change; he also was to be responsible for recording project activities. In other words, the major responsibility for the research was to be in South Brooklyn, parallel to the training-service activity. This arrangement would provide the opportunity for rapid feedback and close communication and collaboration. There was also to be a research aide in Brooklyn. The assistant director for research was a social psychologist on the College faculty with full-time teaching and research responsibilities in Ithaca. His role was pictured as consultant and adviser on research design and instrument development. Data analysis was to be carried out in Ithaca by two part-time research assistants and two graduate students. The initial budget reflected this plan, providing a competitive salary for the on-site research associate, salaries for the part-time Ithaca staff and secretarial help. Funds also were budgeted for data processing and occasional travel between Ithaca and New York City.

When it proved to be impossible to recruit a well-qualified full-time resident researcher quickly, an anthropologist from Syracuse, Professor Manet Fowler, agreed to observe and consult temporarily early in the first training period. The project leadership had already agreed that unobtrusive research efforts would be permissible at the beginning. The project proposal suggested not starting research activity until the program was well established, but from the research standpoint it was considered wise to have an observer present as soon as possible, even though the researcher would have no voice in determining program. A second temporary observer, Mrs. Konan, who was a Ph.D. candidate in sociology, spent the summer of 1969 as a full-time on-site research staff member, helping with whatever needed to be done.

SHIFT IN RESEARCH RESPONSIBILITY TO ITHACA

By May, 1969 it was clear that qualified social scientists were not going to be interested in spending full time on this project. A decision was made to assign major responsibility for research design and administration to the assistant director for research. In effect, he became the principal investigator, with the task of seeing what could be done within the constraints imposed by the program objectives and plan, the prevailing attitudes toward research among program participants, and the staff available to carry out research operations; at the same time he was responsible for his regular teaching and research obligations. Under the revised plan, one of the group workers, Miss Dorothy Small, was made the research associate, with responsibility for providing liaison between the research staff in Ithaca and project staff in Brooklyn, but with no responsibility for research design. The two part-time assistants in Ithaca were Mrs. Margaret Harding, who had social work training and experience, and Mrs. Martha Cheney with home economics training. Both had assisted on other poverty research projects. Under the new plan they were given greater responsibility for developing data gathering techniques and data coordination than was originally intended. These four people worked together from July, 1969 throughout the operational part of the project and had major responsibility for preparing the reports at the end of the project. There was also a number of graduate students; however, with the exception of Mrs. Konan, none had an opportunity to spend enough time in Brooklyn to find this assignment a useful part of her graduate training. As mentioned elsewhere, it had been hoped that segments of the program could be treated as small projects for semi-independent study by students, but this idea was unrealistic in view of the very limited time students could spend there and all the other constraints on research. During the last year of the project, a writer with training in city planning assisted in updating information about the project area, participated in interviews with the key staff, and helped to analyze transcripts and staff meeting minutes.

COMMUNICATION ON RESEARCH

Another effect of the new research plan was to expect the whole staff in South Brooklyn to share in data collection, and to make Miss Small responsible for forwarding the data to Ithaca. In view of the prevailing negative attitude toward research, the on-site research associate was often the unpopular expeditor, prodding the staff for reports.

The communication between Miss Small and the Ithaca staff became the key to successful research operation. The Ithaca staff was not free to make frequent trips to South Brooklyn; the assistant director, because of other professional obligations, and the assistants because of their part-time status. Miss Small came to Ithaca for several two- or three-day conferences on plans for data collection, new substudies, revision of forms, and transmittal of the narrative account of project activities.

It was Miss Small's responsibility to forward all completed forms on family service to Ithaca so record keeping and analysis could be carried on. For the reasons described in the supplement on research forms this method of data collection was frequently a frustrating and inefficient process. A weekly telephone call, at a prearranged time, proved to be a most effective procedure and was used to fill gaps and check data discrepancies. It also was used to alert the Ithaca staff to program plans.

MAJOR TASKS OF THE RESEARCH COMPONENT

Long Range Evaluation

The research component's primary mission was to gather, analyze, and interpret data that would permit long-range evaluation of the project in relation to its three major objectives. This meant collecting data about the two target populations, the paraprofessionals and the families served, and about the organization itself. There was concern about both the effect of the project experience on the people involved and about the processes that had made it effective or ineffective. Paraprofessionals were both a target audience and part of the staff through whom the program was carried out for the benefit of other families. Data were gathered under three major headings, corresponding to the three major objectives, with many different aspects considered at different times. Some of the topics on which data were assembled were:

1) Paraprofessionals: selection, training, service activities, multiple roles, performance evaluation, attitudes toward the project, need for supervision, impact of the project on them.

2) Community families served by the project: demographic description, volume and type of service received, topics and services to which they responded, evidence of change and adoption of new practices, participation in group sessions.

3) The organization: processes followed in administering the project, growth of the organization, decision making, crises, responses to crises, key staff activities, supervision, managerial strategies and compromises, policy development and execution, and relationships with community organizations.

All of these topics have been considered in earlier chapters and data will not be repeated here. Data were more complete on some topics than others.

Short Term Evaluation

In addition the research staff was expected to provide the program staff with immediate feedback to be used in program modification. The distance and long delays in receiving data made this part of the assignment relatively unproductive, as described in the discussion of the attempts to evaluate the pre- and in-service training sessions in Chapter V. The program staff had usually made program changes by the time the research staff had the data.

Staff Service for the Project Administration

A third assignment was to plan and carry out short-term studies primarily for the use of the project administrator. One of these was a survey of wage levels being paid visiting homemakers in other projects. Whenever possible, forms were designed to serve both research and program purposes. For example, family assistants' application interviews were designed for both administrative and research purposes. The basic record keeping about families served also was set up with the help of the research staff. A map project, undertaken as the groundwork for one substudy, helped the director to identify parts of the project area that had not been touched by project activity; this influenced the choice of new trainees for the final training class.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The initial research plan called for studying attitudinal and behavioral change on the part of both the family assistants and the community residents. To study change it would have been necessary to select one or more specific attitudes or behaviors, measure them before exposure to the program and again after the program experience. None of these steps was possible for the following reasons:

1) Resistance to research and subordinate role of research to project survival.
2) Lack of designation of specific attitudes or behaviors that the program was to change due to the diverse nature of the training and service content.
3) A search of available instruments revealed a dearth of instrumentation appropriate for the purposes of the project or the population involved.

The exploratory nature of the early training activity and subsequent changes in "treatment" of families led to a change in strategy. Research effort was directed to obtaining descriptive rather than evaluative data, making use of a number of techniques. Early use of participant observation was of limited value because it lacked detail and specificity. When self reports were used with trainees or staff, there was a tendency for most participants to rate many activities indiscriminately high. The assistant director for training, because of her professional training and her role, was able to provide introspective reactions of considerable value to the research staff.

As the project began to provide service, the decision was made to collect data that would provide a count of the contacts made in the community and to work to get as much supplementary information as possible on demographic or other facts that would help to reveal the program's scope and impact in a descriptive manner. With the ultimate goal of trying to understand and report on the program's outcome, it was essential to have information on what the family assistants were doing in their encounters with the families, as well as the numbers visited.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS: FORMS

Data gathering techniques were developed within the constraints of the agreement described as a compromise with hostility toward research. Major reliance was placed on forms for collection of demographic data on participants and for reporting recurrent operations like family visits and services provided. These were developed jointly by Ithaca and South Brooklyn research staff and were usually approved by group workers before being put into use. Most forms about families were completed by the family assistants who were in direct contact with them.

The Research Data Flow Chart

The plan for data collection, analysis, and interpretation was put into graphic form during the early months of the project. (See Figure 2 on next page.) The five major steps in delivering service to families were pictured as recruitment and selection of paraprofessionals, training, supervision, family contacts and visits, and impact of the project. At that time it was assumed that each step would be carried out according to plan and would be recorded on forms developed for the purpose. A breakdown anywhere in the chain would interrupt both the flow of service and the flow of data. Some steps in the sequence were performed and recorded more fully than others. Each step has been discussed in the appropriate section of this report.

The Forms Used For Data Collection

Forms were a more satisfactory method of data collection for some activities than others. For example, they were excellent for recording data about applicants for training. The difficulty associated with supervision of the work of the family assistants has been described. The forms developed to record supervision were used very little and were finally abandoned. All the forms have been described in Supplement No. 5, The Forms for Data Collection.

Problems in the Use of Forms

Procedural problems have been detailed in the supplement. In brief, they were:

1) Incompleteness of individual reports and of total sequence for any family.

2) Delays in receiving reports in Ithaca.

3) Misunderstanding of questions. Even after checking with on-site staff for language, questions were often interpreted several different ways.

4) Preconceptions about the course the activity would take, and the range of responses to questions.

RESEARCH DATA FLOW CHART

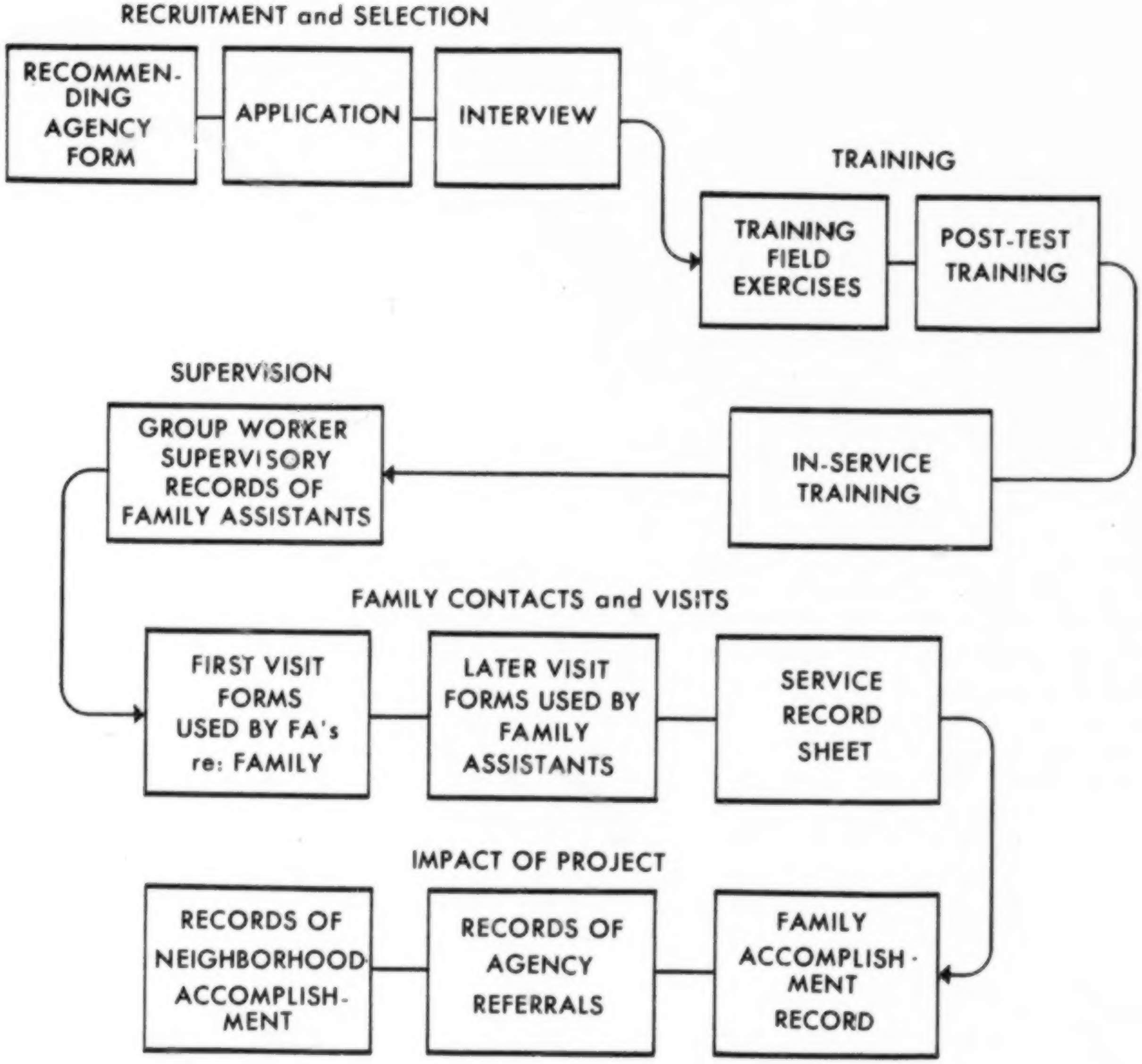

RECRUITMENT and SELECTION
RECOMMENDING AGENCY FORM
APPLICATION
INTERVIEW
TRAINING
TRAINING FIELD EXERCISES
POST-TEST TRAINING
IN-SERVICE TRAINING
SUPERVISION
GROUP WORKER SUPERVISORY RECORDS OF FAMILY ASSISTANTS
FAMILY CONTACTS and VISITS
FIRST VISIT FORMS USED BY FA's re: FAMILY
LATER VISIT FORMS USED BY FAMILY ASSISTANTS
SERVICE RECORD SHEET
IMPACT OF PROJECT
FAMILY ACCOMPLISHMENT RECORD
RECORDS OF AGENCY REFERRALS
RECORDS OF NEIGHBORHOOD ACCOMPLISHMENT

FIGURE 2

5) Frequent changes in program, often about the time forms were revised to reflect the preceding stage of program development.

6) Uneven level of language skill: vocabulary, low literacy level even in English of some family assistants. Unfamiliar activity: few family assistants had any prior work experience calling for much writing.

Attitudes toward research probably affected the data gathering process as much as procedural problems. Suspicion, and unwillingness to commit to paper anything confidential or presumed damaging were common. Neither family assistants nor group workers saw the value of negative data. They were reluctant to reveal failures. In general, few ever fully concurred with the idea that research reporting was part of their job.

OTHER DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Other major sources of data were observation and reporting on occasional trips to the site by Ithaca staff; guided interviews with key staff, family assistants, and personnel from other agencies serving the same population; conferences in Ithaca and New York; speeches made by project personnel at classes, conferences, etc. in Ithaca; and informal discussions with project personnel. After trips and conferences the Ithaca staff always dictated reports. Many of the interviews, speeches, and conferences were tape recorded. In addition, the research associate kept a journal of project activity and staff meeting minutes and was responsible for sending copies to Ithaca routinely.

Problems in Use of Transcripts

Transcription of tape recordings proved to be a major undertaking, often taking many more hours than the routine allowance for such work. This was especially true of conferences where there were likely to be several voices, sometimes overlapping. Guided interviews in which the respondent had a list of questions or topics in advance were productive, even though transcripts often ran to over 100 pages and required many hours of analysis. In addition, there were mechanical breakdowns in equipment that were not recognized in time to avoid losing some of the desired material. At the beginning, family assistants were uneasy about the tape recorder, and it was never used in their class sessions. However, those who were individually interviewed usually seemed to feel they had something important to say and were glad to have it recorded. The key staff also seemed to get over initial uneasiness with the tape recorder, but it was only during the phase-out period that it was used by key staff to send occasional reports on the progress of the training.

In the absence of frequent visits it was suggested repeatedly that staff members could use the recording equipment to send weekly bulletins, but this never became a routine practice. Regular written reports were not feasible because of time pressure. When the Ithaca research staff took the initiative to arrange a session and plan the questions, the resulting guided interview was a productive means of getting information and opinions. The key staff were always very cooperative. It was also possible to get responses from several key people much more rapidly in this manner than it was to obtain answers to written questions. In addition, there was an opportunity for immediate clarification if either the question or the answer was not clear. In retrospect, this method should have been used more often and earlier instead of relying primarily on forms.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Analysis

Data analysis alternated between tabulating data received and content analysis of interviews and other sources to identify a theme or themes. Some types of data were collected routinely through the life of the project, especially information on families served and types of service rendered. Other data were gathered for special investigation of topics on which more information was desired. Codes were developed from the data and became the basis for further analysis, as described in Chapter V. Throughout the project, data were processed by hand and summarized in terms of descriptive statistics. The computer was considered for analyzing some material as the pool of data increased, but this was rejected because it was too late in the project before the most satisfactory coding schemes were developed.

Interpretation

The major use of the information on project activities and operations was to develop a coherent account of the functioning of the project so that the story of the project and what has been learned about working in the urban setting could be told. Understanding program modifications, how decisions were made, and the interactions of the various participants should contribute to future program planning. An attempt has been made to show what actually happened in contrast to prior expectations--the reasons for changing program plans, the informal reactions of participants, and some of the problems encountered--in order to suggest solutions that may be helpful to others.

In this respect the present report uses a similar approach to the program reporting in Weissman's account of Mobilization for Youth. (34) See, for example, the description of a consumer affairs program that had to be modified as it went along that is included in Weissman. (34, Volume 2) The process of interpretation also tried to show the interaction of social action concerns and educational efforts.

The second major endeavor in interpreting the data was to assess the impact of project activities on the various groups and individuals who participated. This is the most speculative part of the interpretation because of the constraints on measurement already described. Short-term impact is reflected in the family assistants' reports on their own reactions and what they have observed among their families, but long-term assessment would require a follow-up study.

An attempt was made to find predictive factors for the selection of paraprofessionals by putting the application form and interview material together with the evaluations of family assistants made by the key staff. Individual differences were found, but the critical differences were not recorded in connection with the application interviews. Most factors recorded in the formal application materials such as previous education or employment were relatively unrelated to subsequent job performance.

One of the major ideas developed during the project was that families likely to be good prospects for an educational program in home management are to be found among those with a relatively light problem load. This hypothesis was confirmed by putting together family information and service information for several subgroups of families visited. The research staff spent a great deal of time testing this hypothesis because of its great importance for program planning in other poverty areas.

XI. ASSUMPTIONS AND REALITIES

This chapter scrutinizes the Cornell-OEO Project proposal as a model or working plan by considering the underlying assumptions, the fixed features or "givens," and the areas of discretion. The analysis provides a framework for the presentation of project processes and outcomes. It also constitutes a format that is relevant for reviewing other social action programs.

From the College point of view the project was undertaken partly to find out what adaptations of traditional Cooperative Extension methods would be required to operate a meaningful educational program for low-income urban residents. It was not built on an explicit behavior theory nor was it created as a test of any theory. However, it was built on a series of assumptions, some of which turned out to be only partially correct and where wrong they led to conflict and required accommodation.

The proposal consisted of a set of pragmatic objectives and the model of a mechanism for their implementation. Since the basic method employed by extension is education, the mechanism was a system to deliver information. The proposal specified staff and organization structure, details of site, population to be served, and training-service content, as well as overall goals. In addition, it included an evaluative research component. It suggested that a local group would cooperate in sponsoring the project and assumed that participants would subscribe to the whole program.

UNDERLYING PROPOSAL ASSUMPTION

It was assumed that education was an effective means of bringing about individual change by providing people with information that would enable them to solve problems more effectively in the areas of consumer activity and home management. That a properly informed individual could and would solve his own problems and control his own welfare was another assumption. A third unstated assumption was that the physical or material welfare of individuals is exceedingly important.

These assumptions and value judgements, widely accepted in the academic community, were thought to be shared by residents of the low-income urban community as well.

The reliance on education as a means of alleviating poverty was consistent with the basic Cooperative Extension assumptions as expressed in, A People and a Spirit. (6)

> . . . The quality and continuity of education received determines the access which the individual will have to the abundance of society . . . . The unskilled are shut out of the economic system and hence denied the opportunity to acquire a quality life.
> (16, p. 59)

COMMUNITY AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT

The family assistants expressed the community's primary challenge that this was not a social change program addressed to the area's high priority problems such as housing, drugs, inadequate places to shop, and a lack of child care facilities. The question of priorities was the first major difference between the College's program goals and the community's perceived needs.

The essential element that was missing in the early development of the project was local participation or consultation. That probably would have revealed that consumer education was low on the list of competing community needs. (See Appendix C and Supplement No. 3, The Cornell-OEO Project Through the Eyes of the Participants.) Omission of this step when the proposal was being drafted was a calculated risk. The advice that prevailed was not to raise community hopes by making contact before funding was firmly in hand. Recognizing the potential dangers of not consulting residents, the proposal writers included provisions for consultation about program content and left room for response to community need within the capabilities of the College.

The program participants had no quarrel with the value of good health, comfortable and attractive living, and family harmony. But as to the most effective means of obtaining these ends, there were major disagreements. Some accepted the idea, narrowly defined, that they could live better by learning all they could about such matters as protecting themselves from consumer fraud, using the most advantageous sources of credit, and shopping carefully, even though their initial reactions had been that other problems had higher priority and that people were being taught how to be poor. Experience in the project revealed that the families most interested in this type of information were already moderately secure, usually including a breadwinner in steady, even if low-paid employment, and living in the public housing projects.

There was community acceptance of these values, but there was less unanimity on the idea that these values were obtainable through education. Those who rejected education said, in effect, that their knowledge was adequate and the source of the problem was external, e.g., poor shopping facilities or lack of public and private housing.

Behind the challenge of priorities and intertwined with it was a basic disagreement on the means to alleviate community problems. The issue, simply put, was one of the locus of control for problem alleviation on both the individual and the community level. There was little confidence that education of individuals would result in any change in conditions that were regarded as far more serious than the problems to which the project was addressed. The most vocal people regarded the individual as relatively powerless and unable to control what happened and therefore clamored for Cornell or the state or some other external body to provide solutions. The question of internal versus external control underlies the differences between the views or assumptions implicit in the project proposal and those of community residents.

ACCOMMODATION: KEY TO PROJECT SURVIVAL

It was realized almost immediately that the survival of the project would depend to a great extent upon the successful accommodation of these differences. The result was a two-level operation--one functioning according to the proposal model at the individual level and the other created to respond to community problems.

SUPPLY-AND DEMAND-ACTIVATED PROCESS

Basically the project was exploring ways of developing an information delivery system to provide needed facts and data on uses of resources to people for whom this information was not readily accessible. This system entailed a combination of what Bruce (2) calls the supply-and-demand-activated systems of information process. The supply-activated process is a one way flow of information activated by the pressure of new discoveries and directed to audiences at the discoverer's initiative. The demand-activated process responds to the problems submitted to the expert by a local audience. The purposes and structures of these two approaches create different requirements.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION DEMAND RECOGNIZED

The information delivery system was intended to incorporate both supply and demand concepts by providing available College expertise on problems known to occur frequently in low-income neighborhoods while remaining sensitive to specific community-initiated information needs. This provision appeared explicitly in the project proposal when the College's readily available information supply was defined and the need for deeper understanding of the local situation was acknowledged.

> The New York State College of Home Economics[1] has skilled teaching and research personnel who are concerned with human development and the quality of the human environment. Food buying, nutrition, care and selection of clothing, housing, housekeeping practices, money management, family relationships, and child care are areas in which the College can actively contribute relevant information and assistance to urban low-income families. The leaders and families cooperating in the project can bring to the attention of the College information about the depth and complexities of problems related to these areas. (26, p. 1)

The demand-activated community input is invited in the proposal discussion of training.

> Appropriate subject matter content will be decided upon by cooperating organization representatives, the Trainees and the Project community staff, and will be dependent upon perceived needs and interest in the community. (26, p. 7)

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[1] See footnote 1 on p. 1.

PROPOSAL COMMITMENTS

The general program goals indicated recognition of the need for greater understanding of the processes involved in working with a low-income urban community. The proposal's exploratory orientation and emphasis on demonstrating an effective delivery mechanism required both openness to ideas and flexibility in incorporating them. But the proposal had basic content and implementation commitments that could not be ignored. These were stated explicitly in Chapter III.

VALUE ASSUMPTIONS AND VALIDITY ASSUMPTIONS

Many of the leading authorities (3, 29, 33) who discuss the evaluation of social programs stress the importance of recognizing the links that relate program objectives, theory of behavior, making theory operational, implementation mechanics, and outcomes. In the case of the Cornell-OEO proposal, many of the details pertaining to the mechanisms were described, but the complex assumptive relationship involved were unstated.

Suchman (29) stresses the importance of recognizing the critical role played by the assumptions that underlie objectives in understanding a social program's dynamics and outcomes. He writes:

> The process of seeking to understand the underlying assumptions of an objective is akin to that of questioning the validity of one's hypothesis. Involved is a concern with the theoretical basis of one's belief that "activity A will produce effect B." (29, p. 41)

He goes on to distinguish and discuss two types of assumptions:

> Assumptions may be classified into two types--value assumptions and validity assumptions. Value assumptions pertain to the system of beliefs concerning what is "good" within society or a subgroup of that society. Thus we have such almost universally accepted value assumptions as, "Human life is worth saving; Unnecessary suffering is bad; Good health is to be desired." Such value assumptions as we have noted previously may vary from group to group and result in value conflicts that create controversy over goals and means of public service programs. (29, p. 42)
>
> Validity assumptions are much more specifically related to program objectives. Such assumptions, for example, underlie our belief that the cause for much prenatal mortality may be found in a lack of care during pregnancy and that prenatal clinics which supply information to expectant mothers can improve such care and result in a reduction in the prenatal mortality. These validity assumptions help to explain the current move from mental institutions to home care based on the belief that people are better off at home than in institutions. (29, p. 42)

Some of the basic value assumptions underlying the Cornell-OEO Project have already been mentioned. We have also seen that differences in regard to priorities among values required a second or community level of operation.

This accommodation permitted the delivery system to be tried out. Employment of Suchman's value-validity distinction provides a framework for considering the mechanisms developed to implement the objectives.

VALIDITY ASSUMPTION AND DELIVERY MECHANISM

The proposal allowed for some flexibility in the project that would permit community input once the project was definitely established and funded. The way this was planned is stated in the proposal in the following fashion:

> . . . program and research components will be conducted within the framework of an interested community organization such as a tenants' organization. Every attempt will be made to locate and work with a group or organization which is interested in an action research project such as is outlined within this proposal. (26, p. 6)

Some preliminary conferences were held with leaders of community service, social agencies, and other organization to get advice. A later meeting was held with grass roots people representing clubs, tenants' associations, and agency professionals. The content of this meeting is revealed in the project's first six month report:

> Discussions at this meeting centered around purpose and objectives of the project; qualification necessary for trainee applicants; procedures for recruiting prospective trainee applicants; name for Trainees after training completed; allowance for dropout from program; and best time of day for training sessions. (27, p. 5).

Based on the reactions at these meetings, the program appeared to have the endorsement of both the stable organizations in the area and the "grass roots people" though no formal agreement with a single sponsoring organization was made.

It was not until after the first class of aides had been selected and started training that the disagreement about value assumptions and priorities mentioned earlier were brought into the open. The class included some women who had attended the February 24 meeting to discuss project endorsement. Perhaps there was misunderstanding or perhaps bringing the project into the neighborhood, with jobs to be filled, was a strong enough incentive so that goals were not examined critically.

It is instructive to look more closely at the value assumptions and validity assumptions as the community residents see them. They argued strongly that it was the circumstances under which they had to operate when dealing with their consumer problems and other problems of daily life that were overpowering. In fact, they contend that their circumstances created or at least heightened their problems. They said they did not lack knowledge of nutrition but lacked stores with good produce at a reasonable price. Saving pennies on purchases was not as valid a solution to alleviate their money management plight as would be jobs that would bring them more income, or responsive officials who recognized the impact of a cut in welfare payments.

Figure 3 on page 149 shows the perceptions of the circumstance and identifies the major elements: problem-solving skill improvement versus situational constraints. The proposal writer contended if the project could increase residents' problem-solving skill, residents would be able to deal with their problems more effectively. The community replied, "If you would eliminate the constraints under which we have to operate, we would have no trouble solving our problems at our current problem-solving level. Individual problem-solving inefficiency is not the locus of the dilemma." They added, "How many of you could get along on $4,000 a year?"

MAKING PROJECT OBJECTIVES OPERATIONAL

Weiss (33) notes that a high proportion of the evaluations of social action programs have recorded neutral or negative program outcomes. She suggests that such outcomes should not be unquestionably accepted as evidence for program abandonment; null results may be traced to deficient social science or human behavior theory, but may also be due to failure to make the theory operational. Regardless of program outcome there is much to be learned by examining the mechanism conceived to implement program objectives.

The project proposal was very specific in some respects and very ambiguous in others. The critical fixed elements are enumerated below.

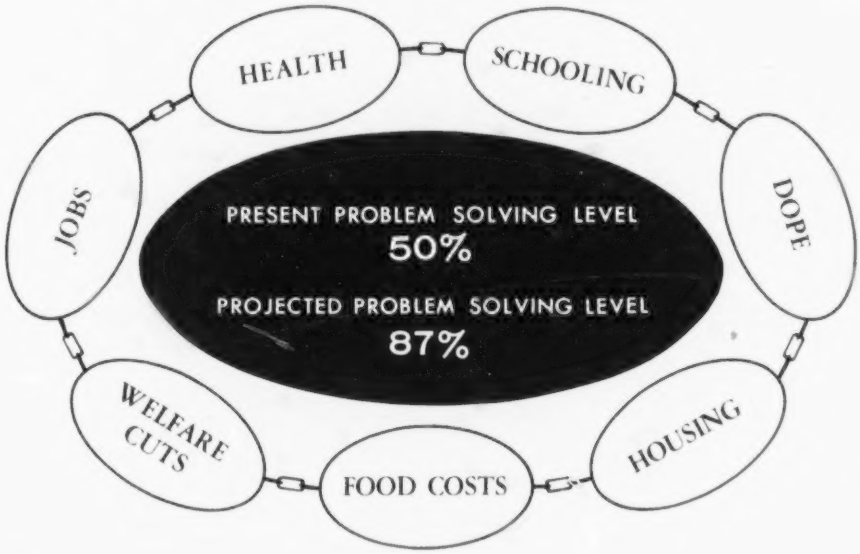
High Proportion of Paraprofessionals to Professionals and Families to be Reached

The multiplier effect found in traditional extension work consisting of an expert sharing information with local leaders as an audience was built in. The major variation from Cooperative Extension's tradition was the teaching homemakers' interaction with the family on a one-to-one basis. (See Figure 4.)

In this project one home economist from the College staff, assisted by a professionally trained home economics aide, was expected to train ten waves of paraprofessionals with a group worker and eight paraprofessionals in each wave. After training, the group worker would supervise the eight paraprofessionals calling on the home economists for additional home management information as needed. Each paraprofessional was to work with five families at a time for up to six months; 80 paraprofessionals would be in touch with 400 families at a time. In this fashion 800 families would be contacted per year and provided with information initially presented by two professional home economists.

One Group Worker Supervising Each Group of Trainees

The group worker's position was originally conceived to be filled by a professional social worker who was to help with the training and supervise her own group of eight aides once they began their community service. The group worker role could not be staffed by a professionally trained person, however, due to salary level and the minimum job security accompanying the temporary nature of the project. On-site staff also doubted that a professionally trained social worker could establish rapport with the community people in light of the prevailing image of social workers.



PROBLEM SOLVING SKILL IMPROVEMENT
vs SITUATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

HEALTH
SCHOOLING
DOPE
HOUSING
FOOD COSTS
WELFARE CUTS
JOBS
PRESENT PROBLEM SOLVING LEVEL
50%
PROJECTED PROBLEM SOLVING LEVEL
87%

FIGURE 3

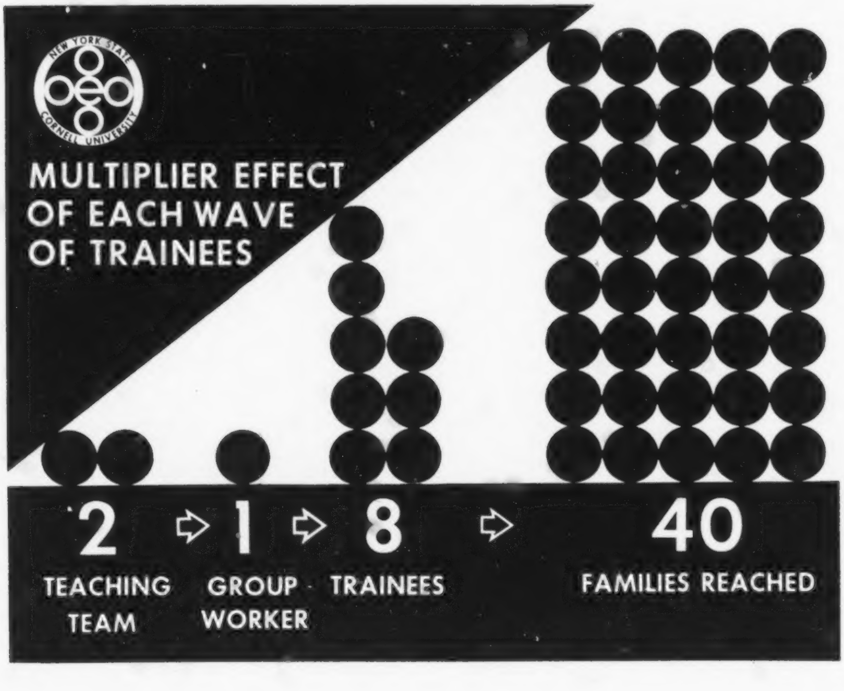


FIGURE 4

Ratio of Family Assistants to Family

There was no open disagreement about the multiplier concept by which eight paraprofessionals would reach 40 community families each six months. Five families were to be assigned to each family assistant. The plan called for families to be worked with for at most a six month period; then replaced with new families. The proposal noted that the families might continue on for longer periods of time in some instances.

Training Class Sizes Set at Eight

The training classes were set at eight members to allow for individual attention and to maintain a manageable group size for field trips or other educational experiences.

In anticipation of attrition, 12 members were included in the first training class. The second training groups had eight members. The third and fourth groups had eight and ten members respectively. Only one person did not complete training in the last three groups.

Evaluative Research Cooperation in Program

The proposal required that from the outset a research component was to play an integral part in the ongoing program. It would start slowly and be more in evidence once organizational stability had been established. The mere word "research" was so emotionally loaded that several compromise solutions had to be reached with family assistants participating in the project.

Role Flexibility Becomes Role Ambiguity

The fact that a totally new organization was being created and the recognition that the role occupants might draw candidates whose credentials were not traditional, required writing most position descriptions quite openly. For example, greater emphasis on experience than on formal training permitted people to be brought into the organization who might otherwise have been excluded.

The importance of the individuals chosen for these roles should be stressed. Since there were no prototypes of project roles in the neighborhood they created their own parts. The expectations, individual values, priorities, and aspirations, as well as apprehensions, all played a part.

REALITIES: THE PROJECT AREA

The details of making the project objectives operational provided one set of parameters. But an equally important "given" was the project area. This was especially true as the realities of the area became known.

The location chosen for the Cornell-OEO Project was an area in Brooklyn, including 13 census tracts occupied by roughly 60,000 people. It was part of the area served by the South Brooklyn Community Progress Corporation, part of the Red Hook-Gowanus District of the City Health Department, and part of local School District 15. The project boundaries encompassed a substantial portion of the area known as South Brooklyn and contained two low-income public housing projects--Gowanus Houses built in 1949 and Wyckoff Gardens completed December 31, 1967. South Brooklyn, once the southern part of the original 17th century town of Breuckelen, today is close to downtown in the northwest quadrant of modern Brooklyn. The map in Appendix B shows the area's relationship to the city and the immediately surrounding neighborhoods. It lies between Prospect Park on the southeast and the East River on the northwest. The Gowanus Canal with its accompanying industries and truck traffic enters the area from the south. There is no longer any traffic on the canal, but manufacturing enterprises have remained active. South Brooklyn is also situated between two areas that were developed in the 19th century as suburbs for the well-to-do, Brooklyn Heights and Park Slope.

Conditions in the South Brooklyn community influenced the selection of the area for the project and shaped the kinds of work the project could do. The choice was made because it was thought to be an area in which the project would be workable. The ethnic composition, understood to be evenly divided among black, white, and Puerto Rican, meant it was possible to learn about reaching all three groups. The feasibility study contacts had indicated that the area was not a Brownsville in abject poverty nor had there been evidence of militant hostility toward academic outsiders. It was not an area that had received the publicity and massive funding to be found in East Harlem or Bedford Stuyvesant. There was not likely to be competition with other service organizations. Its proximity to downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan meant that stores were accessible to try out new found consumer knowledge.

The picture of the project area just presented was the one the College staff had when the project began. Additional facts soon altered the picture. There was an intense housing shortage caused by the renovation of houses in the northwestern section (Boerum Hill) and eastern section (Park Slope). This was further aggravated by demolition of housing for an addition to Wyckoff Gardens that was planned but had not been built. With the influx of young professionals and other middle class to the renovated areas, schools have improved, streets have become cleaner, and other public services are more in evidence. Another shift in population has been the Puerto Ricans moving in as others moved out. The community consists of a number of pockets of different ethnic groups. Though there were many organizations in the community only one appeared to have an active program for consumer education.

Nearby resources were avilable to provide health service and legal aid. Within the two housing projects there was a senior citizens' center, a youth recreation program, and a school-related parents' center. Housing projects, churches, and the neighborhood house (Colony South Brooklyn Neighborhood Houses)could usually be counted on to provide temporary space for group activity. The Community Progress Corporation, the local umbrella agency for allocation of New York City Human Resource Administration funds for poverty programs, had a series of factional disputes said to be ethnically based, which reduced its effectiveness as the hub or rallying center for community-wide coordination and strength.

There was a higher proportion of elderly in the neighborhood than anticipated. This population influenced the project's service activity.

The intensity of the drug problem at times facilitated and at other times hindered contact with families. All of these factors helped to shape the program.

THE SUPPLY-ACTIVATED INFORMATION DELIVERY SYSTEM

The discussion of the organization for training and service activity dealt with the creation of an information delivery system. The system described in the research proposal was predominantly a supply-activated-system. It began with the College and was coordinated through the assistant director for training who could draw on College resources in terms of material and personnel. She in turn conveyed the information to family assistants and group workers who passed it on to families. If problems were discovered in the course of training or as a result of working with families, the system could adapt and become a demand-activated system. Then the assistant director for training could make contact with the College to gain new information and incorporate it into the training or pass it along to the community.

If at the outset of the project the links involved in implementing the training-service goals had been enumerated, the step sequence would probably have looked like this:

Dynamics	Participants
1) Expert information on program topics	New York State College of Human Ecology, and Cornell University
2) Community resident trainees available	Community residents
3) Communication via teaching	Assistant director for training, extension aide, group worker, cooperators
4) Information correctly received by trainees	Family assistant trainees
5) Information translated into personal meaning and/or principles applied	Family assistant trainees
6) Recruit and establish rapport with families	Family assistant with group worker and supporting staff
7) Family can and will reveal problems	Community families
8) Accurate diagnosis of problem and ramifications	Family assistant
9) Appropriate prescription for problem alleviator	Family assistant and group worker
10) Resources available in the community to alleviate problems	Community

Dynamics	Participants
11) Awareness of available resources	Family assistant and group worker
12) Development and implementation of solution plan	Family assistant and group worker
13) Review and follow up to confirm problem solution	Family assistant and group worker

This step sequence could have been depicted in a flow chart. Considered as connected steps or links of a chain, the communication system is no stronger than its weakest link. If, for example, the information is incorrectly understood by the trainees, they in turn would pass it on to their families erroneously. If it is not possible to find families willing to cooperate with family assistants, there would be a breakdown at the level of transmitting the information to the community.

The family assistants at the outset were concerned that the priorities involved were not those crucial to the community but as time went on it became clear that there were people in the community who could benefit from this information and willingly sought it.

One step that the family assistants themselves questioned was that they could function as teachers. This was partly due to their definition of teaching. They saw teaching as a more formal activity than standing side-by-side with someone showing her how to do something. In actual practice it turned out that some could and some could not.

As has been shown, the information delivery system involved a series of steps in order to bring College and University expertise to the people of the low-income community. It is vitally important to recognize that the breakdown or ineffective handling of any single step in the series may be enough to defeat the system's problem-solving effort. It should also be noted that the more people involved in the process and the more steps that must be carried out, the greater the probability of malfunction in the process. In a complex series of steps, isolating one and attributing success or failure to it is unrealistic when all elements in the elaborate system cannot be controlled.

An additional fact is that the training and service delivery model assumes the scientific stance of a rational man in a well functioning system. Activities in parts of the system involve the project personnel and are under the direct control of professionals. Other segments' functioning rests with professionals in the community, but outside the project staff. Many of the critical links in the service delivery system are in the hands of the paraprofessionals. A crucial element essential to the system's success is availability of community resources, the lack of which provides a very real constraint on the project's effectiveness.

Lastly, of major importance, are the functional capabilities and attitudes of community residents participating.

This model of the training-service delivery system can be used to identify the elements and connections that facilitated or hindered achievement of project goals.

As the earlier discussion of the delivery system and the project goals has revealed, the project as a supply-activated information system was of questionable value in the eyes of some community participants. The one-to-one educational work by family assistants was designed to help individuals in the community to make better use of their own and community resources and can be identified as level one of the College-community collaboration. This was what the project proposal had described.

THE DEMAND-ACTIVATED INFORMATION DELIVERY SYSTEM

The second level focused more on community development or community-wide action, though there was no explicit mandate or description of this in the project proposal. In fact, work on the second level sprang from a liberal reading of the proposal and recognition that organizational survival in the community was essential for anything proposed to occur. Actually neither the College nor the project could provide the massive funding necessary to achieve such goals as eliminating the housing problem. On the other hand, because the College was working with the community, it was possible to provide technical assistance in locating resources to deal with some of these problems. As a logical outgrowth of these efforts to solve community-wide problems, leadership training for the family assistants was carried out in the later stages of the project to prepare them to take more effective action on the community level in the future.

In this scheme the sequence of events was:

Dynamics	Participants
1) The resource information and/or people available	New York State College of Human Ecology and Cornell University
2) Community representative with access to both the University and community	Project director and key staff
3) Recognition of information needs or community requests for information directed to key staff	Community organizations or individuals
4) Discussion to insure clear designation of the type of information needed to deal with the problem	Community people and experts together
5) Request directed to University	Project director
6) Delivery of information	New York State College of Human Ecology or Cornell University
7) Continued contact and two-way feedback	All participating parties

As in the case of the supply-activated system, for this system to work it was necessary that all the links function properly. The director had to understand fully the community problem for which help was needed. The College and University had to recognize whether they had an appropriate resource person available.

This was the demand-activated process concerning community-wide matters rather than the specific home management program content area. It involved an expanded definition of the College's role and also required that participating individuals learn how to use a consultant's information to best advantage. The on-site staff and residents also had to learn how to mobilize individuals to act as a community in finding the sponsoring organizations and in pursuing the additional steps necessary in developing proposals.

In the project's final stages the leadership training aided in preparing people to recognize information needs relevant to community problem solving and to determine the most likely sources of that information. Actually the work that the project director did with the College throughout the project on the community action level offered a prototype that individuals in the community might follow.

CONSULTANTS FOR COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

In response to some area-dictated priorities consultants were sought from the University to help the community leaders locate sources of funds, acquaint them with funding requirements, and offer suggestions for developing proposals. Early in the project many residents had the idea that complex community-wide problems could be alleviated directly by the University funds and/or the project funds. The project director and other leaders of the community organizations recognized that the temporary nature of the Cornell-OEO Project organization eliminated it as a potential sponsor for any long-term community funding proposals. The University made available housing consultants. In response to community concern over housing, they met with the appropriate community leadership and became familiar with the local efforts and situation. The consultants later produced a report to aid those in the community to pursue housing fund sources.

These community-wide problems were immensely complex and required sound community organization to attack them. The nature of these problems was such that overnight solutions were impossible, even if proposals and funding were instantly available. Most of the community-wide problems involved long-term efforts for solution in contrast to the short-term nature of individual problem solutions. This was not recognized by many project participants critical of program priorities at the outset. The community action became better understood by many residents over the life of the project. Community education was another facet of the two level effort involving the project and the community.

CHAPTER XII CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter summarizes basic conclusions in relation to project objectives and implications for urban extension activity. However, we have confidence in observations that extended over a considerable period of time and are consistent with the experience of other projects.

MAJOR PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The proposal's three major objectives were:

1) to train and employ women in a low-income area in order to increase their interest and personal competence in home management and consumer buying skills;

2) to assist low-income homemakers adapt to more successful home management and consumer buying practices;

3) to provide guidelines for future decisions of policy makers and administrators

   a) by answering some of the pressing questions about selection and effective involvement of indigenous low-income workers in human resources projects, and

   b) by answering some of the questions about effective combinations of professional and indigenous staff in urban Cooperative Extension work.

CONCLUSIONS

TRAIN AND EMPLOY LOCAL WOMEN

These conclusions are based on reports of staff members, application forms and interviews and interviews with family assistants. In brief the basic facts on training and employment are these:

- Thirty-eight local women completed an eight-week, half time training program on home management and consumer education and were subsequently employed in the role of family assistant providing service to community residents.

- Attrition during training and employment was extremely low. This can probably be attributed to wage level, provision for child care, convenience of neighborhood work, and the psychological satisfaction the work provided. Guaranteed employment for a reasonably long period of time was an appealing opportunity and interested candidates always exceeded openings.

- There were pronounced individual differences in women's ability to play the diverse paraprofessional role. Many family assistants found approaching families, interpreting the project and teaching to be the most difficult parts of the work. It was easier for most to assume the role that was later called "expediter" and to give the kind of personal service traditional among neighbors in times of illness and other family stress.

- Initial knowledge and skill level determined whether the training experience was primarily one of organizing and consolidating existing knowledge and skills or a new learning experience. Lack of English language skill was a critical factor that handicapped some participants in both training and employment.

- Key staff showed substantial agreement in their evaluation of overall job performance of the paraprofessionals. Factors most closely related to high ratings were a constellation which suggested family stability and relative security. Age, previous employment and education by themselves were not adequate indicators of future success on the job.

- The multiple roles the family assistants were called upon to play provided a variety of experiences that broadened perspectives and increased feelings of competence.

- Some family assistants benefitted more than others, but as a group family assistants' lives were changed more than any other group involved in the project.

ASSIST LOW-INCOME HOMEMAKERS

Family assistants reported on over 5,000 contacts with more than 500 families. These reports supplemented by interviews with family assistants provide the basis for conclusions and implications about families.

- About a third of the one-to-one contacts were brief, lasting a month or less, but another third were visited regularly for more than six months. The accumulated data from many visits to some families provided an in-depth picture of their situation through the eyes of the family assistants.

- Stage in the family life cycle and a family's problem load were two descriptive dimensions that are highly related to a family's receptiveness to educational efforts by family assistants.

Teaching of home management and consumer education material was welcomed by young families and those with both preschool and grade school children. Less teaching was accomplished with the elderly who had need for other types of service.

A family's problem load was inversely correlated with teaching receptivity. Families classified as having a light problem load (problems in less than three areas outside the home management field) were most responsive to teaching, while multiproblem families (five or more problem areas) received either expediting or personal service most often and took little interest in teaching by family assistants.

- During the first year of the project services classified as expediting in relation to problems outside the home management and consumer education areas were given much more frequently than objectives of the training services.

  In addition expediting was more highly valued by both families and family assistants than teaching.

- Prolonged service directed to obtaining aid from agencies and other types of help for multiproblem families did not usually lead to a teaching relationship.

- Informal groups led by family assistants developed during the second year and attracted some families already contacted individually.

STAFFING, ORGANIZING AND ADMINISTERING THE PROGRAM

The third proposal objective dealt with selection and involvement of indigenous workers and the organizing of professional and paraprofessional staff into an effective work team.

Working patterns within the organization developed because they were needed to satisfy the demands of the operation. Therefore, some of the major conclusions stated on the basis of project experience are both conclusions and implications.

- The top level on-site professional responsible for administration of the project had considerable decision making freedom and a close working relationship with campus administration responsible for the College's contributions to the project.

- Competent professionals with commitment and a knowledge of the area, its residents and institutions, are an invaluable asset in maintaining rapport and cooperation.

- The high ratio of paraprofessionals to professionals increased the difficulty of establishing shared work norms in this newly created organization.

- The fact that the local indigenous paraprofessional was from the area did not guarantee that she would have the skills to establish rapport with area residents.

- Paraprofessionals were more productive when they had strong first line supervision. Since the organization was made up almost entirely of paraprofessionals, supervision was essential.

- The organization could not work independently of the total community context. The residents' perception of area problems, their view of priorities and their beliefs about effective methods for problem solving were essential for the staff to know and understand.

- The temporary nature of the project caused dissipation of participants' energy. The director had to spend precious time applying for funds for project continuation, shoring up other community efforts to carry over enterprizes started with project help, and finding openings for his people, as well as trying to maintain staff morale.

- In the absence of a community board or policy making group the project director had considerably more decision making freedom than the conventional extension director. In addition a close working relationship with campus administration responsible for the College's contribution to the project was essential in adapting standard procedures to the realities of the urban situation.

- This project could not be used as a demonstration that faculty and students could visit freely because of space and time limitations on site, but primarily because of the reluctance of the paraprofessionals to be on exhibit. Faculty visits were minimal after the training had been completed and service became the primary function.

Implications

The lessons learned through this demonstration project have been of a broad scope and have fostered insight. The implications to be presented here are the ones of major importance to extension activity.

1) The gulf is so wide between professionals and community residents that traditional programs cannot be introduced without adaptations. The gulf appears in

- Value judgments regarding priorities in problems to be solved.
- Confidence in education as a viable means of solving problems.
- Attitudes toward empirical research as a basis for sound decision making.
- Ability to understand and accept the specialization of the function of different institutions.
- Belief in the contributions professionals can make to problem solving.

Because of the pervasiveness of these beliefs and attitudes all communication between the community and academic personnel are affected in varying degrees.

2) Urban extension operations cannot be counted on as a base for other college activities such as faculty research or student training.

- Local confidence would have to be gained slowly if at all.
- Introduction of additional activity may jeopardize primary functions.
- Choice of research approach and subject matter is a sensitive area.
- Community does not feel an obligation to help educate students.

3) Urban extension programs may have to include activities other than teaching of a conventional nature. One major choice is the extent to which resources are focused on teaching. Another decision involves the choice between the one-to-one approach and working with a group.

- The time of the whole staff can easily be absorbed in non-teaching activity. Given the pressures of the situation self-discipline and constant review of objectives are needed to insure focus on the primary educational mission.

- It may be necessary to limit the time spent on one-to-one contact as an efficiency consideration. It is possible for the visits to be continued beyond the point where they are productive. Some families probably could be steered into groups soon after the initial one-to-one contacts.

4) Staff development requires constant attention.

- Tensions arise within the organization from ethnic mixtures, ambiguities of role and changing structure in a new organization and from the pervasive pressures of urban life. These tensions necessitate human relations or sensitivity training to help staff get to know what to expect of each other; to get along with each other and with their clientele.

- All staff members are called on for a variety of assignments that change in unpredicted ways as the project develops.

- Paraprofessionals need extensive training and close supportive supervision if their potential contributions are to be realized.

- Both professionals and paraprofessionals need on-the-job training to supplement their initial skills.

5) Including both training and service in the same organization with one staff has both advantages and disadvantages.

ADVANTAGES:

- Assures trainees of jobs.
- Permits modification of training as experience on the job dictates.
- Supervisors have a chance to know trainees well.

DISADVANTAGES:

- Demands on a single supervisory staff may be underestimated.
- Space requirements for an on-going service function are greater than for a succession of classes that no longer use the facilities.

6) Time should be set aside at regular intervals for planning and review by project staff and College based staff together in order to capitalize on what is being learned in the field and to provide the action staff with a more detached perspective on day to day operations.

This could help the project staff to feel they had backing and also would help convey the nature of the urban experience to College faculty.

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APPENDICES

CORNELL-OEO STAFF

South Brooklyn

Name	Position	Initial Employment	Termination Date
	Administration and Management		
Albert Harris, Jr.	Director of Project	2/14/69	6/30/71
Leyla Ocasio	Secretary	7/28/69	6/30/71
Leonalda Ortiz	Secretary (temporary)	10/1/70	1/16/71
	Training and Service		
S. Suzanne Matsen	Assistant Director of Training and Service	11/1/69	6/30/71
Harold Jones	Assistant Director for Planning	1/4/71	6/30/71
Santia Ruiz	Extension Aide	10/27/69	6/30/71
Leonora Harris	Clerk	6/18/69	3/7/70
Betty Shaw	Clerk	6/1/69	6/30/71
Linda Nealy	Clerk-Typist	3/11/70	9/15/70
Thomas Green	General Utility Man	3/24/69	6/30/71
Mary O'Neal	Group Worker	3/3/69	4/4/69
Constance Mackey	Group Worker	3/7/69	6/30/71
Dorothy Small	Group Worker	3/10/69	6/30/69
	Senior Extension Associate	7/1/69	6/30/71
Evelyn Bayo de Antonsen	Secretary	2/28/69	7/21/69
	Group Worker	7/22/69	7/31/70
Joyce Shorter	Group Worker	9/28/69	6/12/70
Leslie Wright	Group Worker	3/12/70	6/30/71
Glauco Castillo	Group Worker	7/15/70	6/30/71
Wave I	Family Assistants		
Gloria Harewood		3/24/69	/30/71
Gladys Lee		3/24/69	3/26/71
Janet Ocean		3/24/69	6/30/71
Louise Reid		3/24/69	3/19/71
Saundra Rivera		3/24/69	6/30/71
Cora Spears		3/24/69	3/19/71
Jean Sutherland		3/24/69	6/30/71
Sonia Velez		3/24/69	6/30/71
Rosalie Waithe		3/24/69	6/30/71
Sadie Weems		3/24/69	6/30/71
Merian Wigfall		3/24/69	6/30/71
Violet Wilks		3/24/69	6/30/71

CORNELL-OEO STAFF - South Brooklyn (continued)

Name	Position	Initial Employment	Termination Date
Wave II	Family Assistants		
Ernestine Avila		7/7/69	8/8/69
Carmen Betty		7/7/69	6/30/71
Florence Enrique		7/7/69	6/30/71
Julia Gonzalez		7/7/69	6/30/71
Phyllis Morgenlander		7/7/69	6/30/71
Ramona Rodriguez		7/7/69	6/30/71
Shirley Skinner		7/7/69	6/30/71
Mary Williams		7/7/69	6/30/71
Wave III	Family Assistants		
Jinette Bartch		10/20/69	1/15/71
Maria Felicie Bess		10/20/69	6/30/71
Carmela Braxton		10/20/69	3/20/70
Jessie Danzy		10/20/69	6/30/71
Patricia Herbert		10/20/69	6/30/71
Cora Little		10/20/69	11/30/70
Emily Shambley		10/20/69	7/15/70
Eugenia Soto		10/20/69	6/30/71
Wave IV	Family Assistants		
Sandra Carter (Boyd)		4/1/70	10/23/71
Rosemary Colding		4/1/70	3/19/71
Julia Fernandez		4/1/70	6/30/71
Carmen Guadalupe (Robles)		4/1/70	6/30/71
Martha Huntley		4/1/70	9/15/70
Priscilla Pagan		4/1/70	6/26/70
Tamami Tabb		4/1/70	6/30/71
Annie Talley		4/1/70	3/19/71
Jessie Williams		4/1/70	6/30/71
Mary Wood		4/1/70	3/26/71
Temporary Staff	Training and Service		
Gregory Harris	Survey Analyst	4/24/69	5/1/69
Linda Harris		6/18/69	3/7/70
Evelyn Boney	Child Care Superintendent	10/6/70	6/30/71
Leonalda Ortiz	Typist	1/16/71	2/26/71
Barbara Taylor	Clerk Typist	10/5/70	12/18/70
Ermelinda Moret	Child Care Aide	10/6/70	12/12/70
Shirley Pierce	Child Care Aide	10/6/70	12/12/70
Hermione Rogers	Child Care Aide	10/6/70	12/12/70
Virginia Oates	Child Care Aide	10/22/70	12/12/70

CORNELL-OEO STAFF - South Brooklyn (continued)

Name	Position	Initial Employment	Termination Date
Temporary Staff	Training and Service		
Cheryl Casselberry	Summer Youth Program Worker	6/23/69	8/31/69
Theodolph Jacobs	Summer Youth Program Worker	6/23/69	7/31/69
Juana Ambia	Spanish Teacher	4/6/71	6/30/71
	Ithaca		
Evaluative Research			
Dr. Edward Ostrander	Assistant Director of Research	11/1/68	6/30/71
Dorothy Small	Senior Research Associate (on site)	7/1/69	6/30/71
Margaret Harding	Assistant to Director for Research	6/17/69	6/30/71
Martha Cheney	Research Assistant	7/1/69	6/30/71
Artyce Hedrick	Graduate Research Assistant	9/16/69	6/8/70
Mildred Konan	Graduate Research Assistant	6/4/69	7/31/70
Lynn Lichtenstein	Research Writer	9/25/70	6/30/71
Grace Emanuel	Secretary	7/1/69	9/1/69
Miriam Kivisalu	Secretary	9/9/69	8/22/70
Patricia Rubine	Secretary	9/1/70	6/30/71
Temporary Staff*			
Charlotte Brunelle	Typist	6/15/70	8/19/70
Diane Charnley	Typist	6/13/69	6/30/69
Gail Cohen	Typist	3/1/71	3/31/71
Marsha Dean	Typist	11/2/70	12/31/70
Barrie Dinkins	Graduate Research Assistant	7/16/69	9/8/69
Manet Fowler	Consultant	3/27/69	6/30/69
Carolyn Green	Typist	6/23/69	7/3/69
Marjorie Knox	Typist	4/7/71	6/30/71
Betty Lyon	Typist	6/10/71	6/30/71
Martha Ellen Mason	Stenographer	7/20/70	8/29/70
Janice Ratner	Typist	2/15/71	2/26/71
Rebecca Rector	TC Helper	6/9/69	12/12/70
Linda Redmond	Typist	6/15/71	6/30/71
Lorraine Snyder	Research Writer	6/1/71	6/10/71
D'Jaris Watson	Consultant	9/1/69	2/28/70

*Staff employed on a temporary basis (for three months or less) to undertake a specific program assignment.

SUPPORTING STAFF AND PERSONNEL

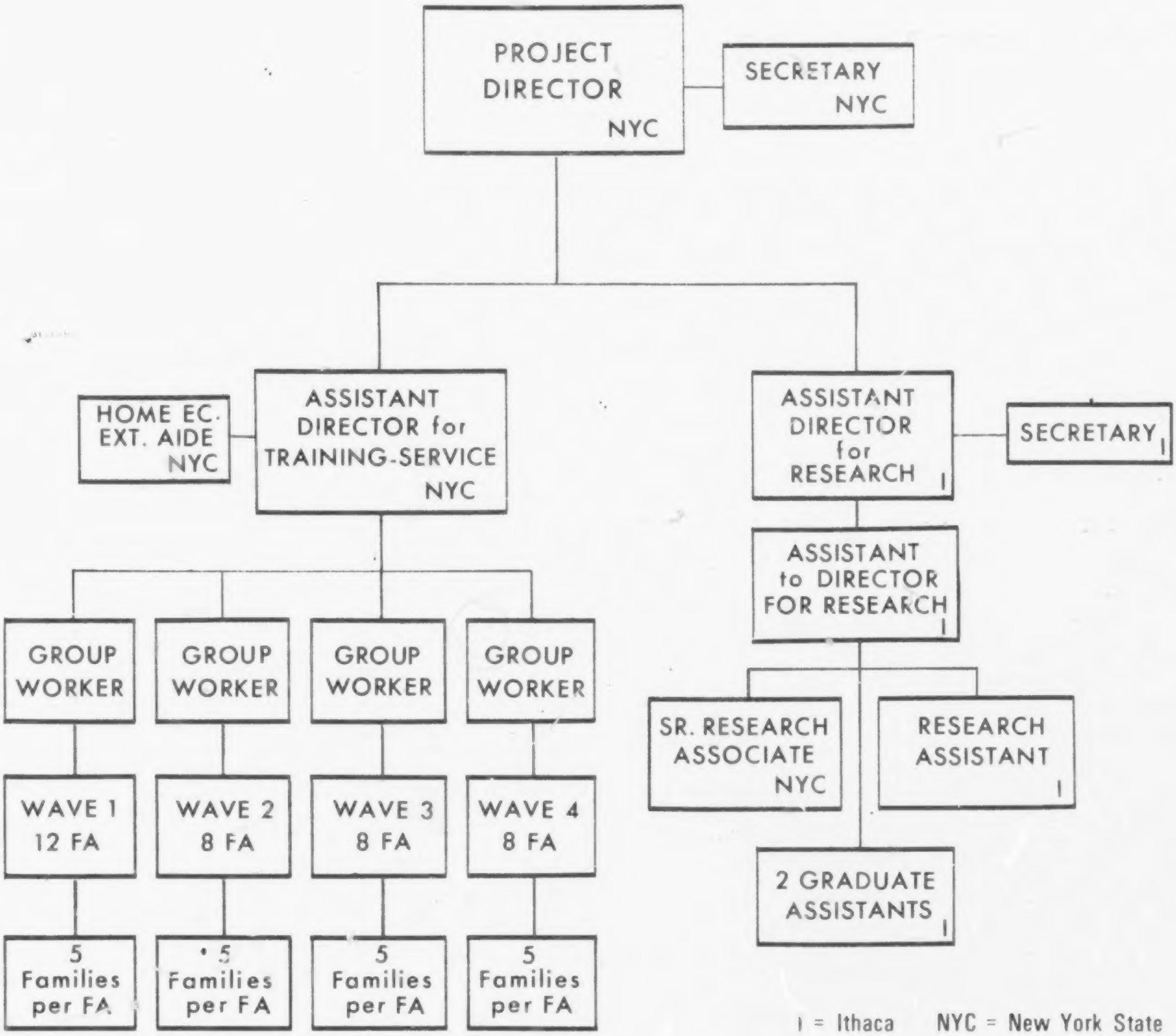
New York State Colleges of Agriculture and Human Ecology at Cornell University

Dr. David C. Knapp, Dean, New York State College of Human Ecology
Dr. Edward H. Smith, Director of Cooperative Extension
Dr. Nyle Brady, Associate Dean and Director of Research,
New York State College of Agriculture
Dr. Lucinda A. Noble, Associate Dean for Public Service,
Associate Director of Cooperative Extension,
New York State College of Human Ecology
Dr. Ethel Vatter, Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Research,
New York State College of Human Ecology
Mrs. Marian M. Kira, Senior Extension Associate
New York State College of Human Ecology
James S. Spero, Senior Extension Associate, 4-H

New York State Office for Community Affairs

Dr. Jack Sable, Director
Dr. Owen F. Peagler
Bernadette Poule
Dr. Alonzo Mitchell, Metropolitan Director
Miss Barbara Post, Field Representative
Dr. Nelly Hartogs, Chief, Division of Innovation and Research

CORNELL OEO PROJECT TRAINING-SERVICE-RESEARCH ORGANIZATION CHART


PROJECT DIRECTOR NYC
SECRETARY NYC
HOME EC. EXT. AIDE NYC
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR for TRAINING-SERVICE NYC
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR for RESEARCH I
SECRETARY I
ASSISTANT to DIRECTOR FOR RESEARCH I
GROUP WORKER
GROUP WORKER
GROUP WORKER
GROUP WORKER
SR. RESEARCH ASSOCIATE NYC
RESEARCH ASSISTANT I
WAVE 1 12 FA
WAVE 2 8 FA
WAVE 3 8 FA
WAVE 4 8 FA
2 GRADUATE ASSISTANTS I
5 Families per FA
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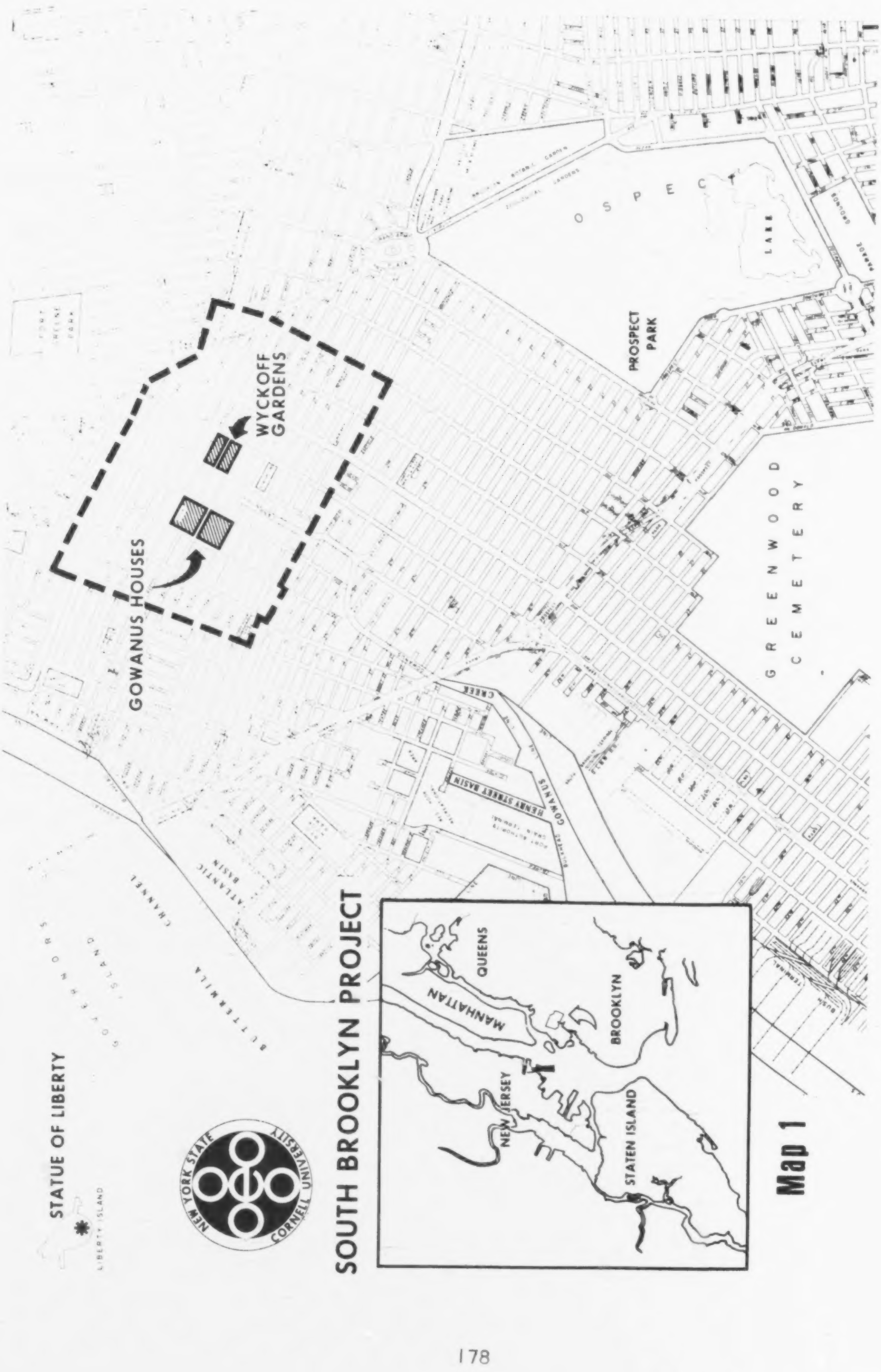
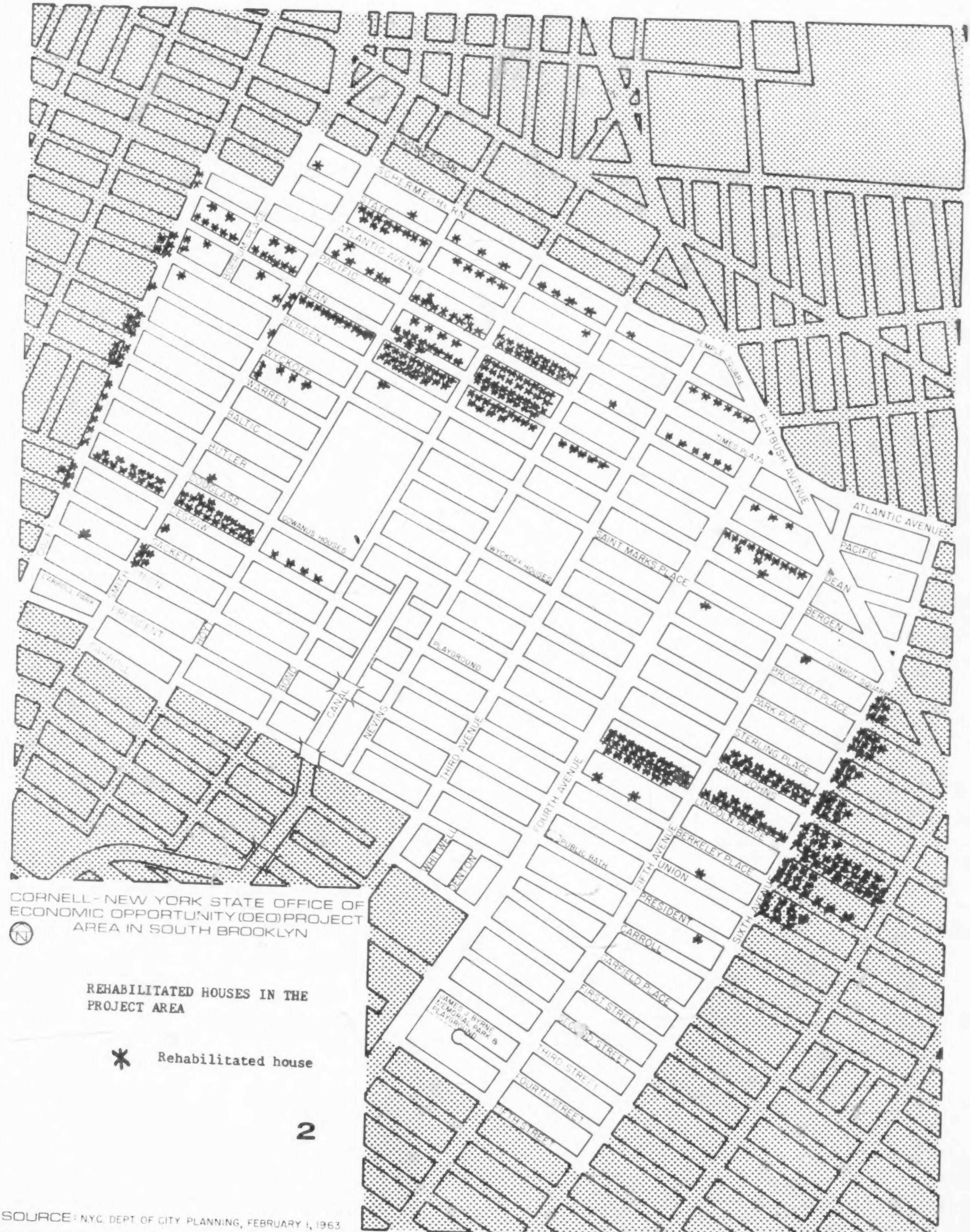
5 Families per FA
I = Ithaca
NYC = New York State



GOWANUS HOUSES
WYCKOFF GARDENS
PROSPECT PARK
GREENWOOD CEMETERY
LAKE
STATUE OF LIBERTY
LIBERTY ISLAND
GOVERNORS ISLAND
BUTTERMILK CHANNEL
ATLANTIC BASIN
HENRY STREET BASIN
GOWANUS CREEK
QUEENS
MANHATTAN
BROOKLYN
NEW JERSEY
STATEN ISLAND

SOUTH BROOKLYN PROJECT

Map 1


SCHERMERHORN
STATE
ATLANTIC AVENUE
PACIFIC
DEAN
BERGEN
WYCKOFF
WARREN
BALTIC
BUTLER
DOUGLASS
DEGRAW
SACKETT
UNION
CARROLL PARK
PRESIDENT
CARROLL
BOERUM PLACE
SMITH
HOYT
BOND
CANAL
NEVINS
THIRD AVENUE
FOURTH AVENUE
FIFTH AVENUE
SIXTH AVENUE
GOWANUS HOUSES
WYCKOFF HOUSES
PLAYGROUND
WHITWELL
DENTON
PUBLIC BATH
TEMPLE SQUARE
TIMES PLAZA
FLATBUSH AVENUE
ATLANTIC AVENUE
PACIFIC
DEAN
BERGEN
CONROY SQUARE
PROSPECT PLACE
PARK PLACE
STERLING PLACE
SAINT JOHNS
LINCOLN PLACE
BERKELEY PLACE
UNION
PRESIDENT
CARROLL
GARFIELD PLACE
FIRST STREET
SECOND STREET
THIRD STREET
FOURTH STREET
FIFTH STREET
SAINT MARKS PLACE
JAMES J. BYRNE MEMORIAL PARK & PLAYGROUND
N

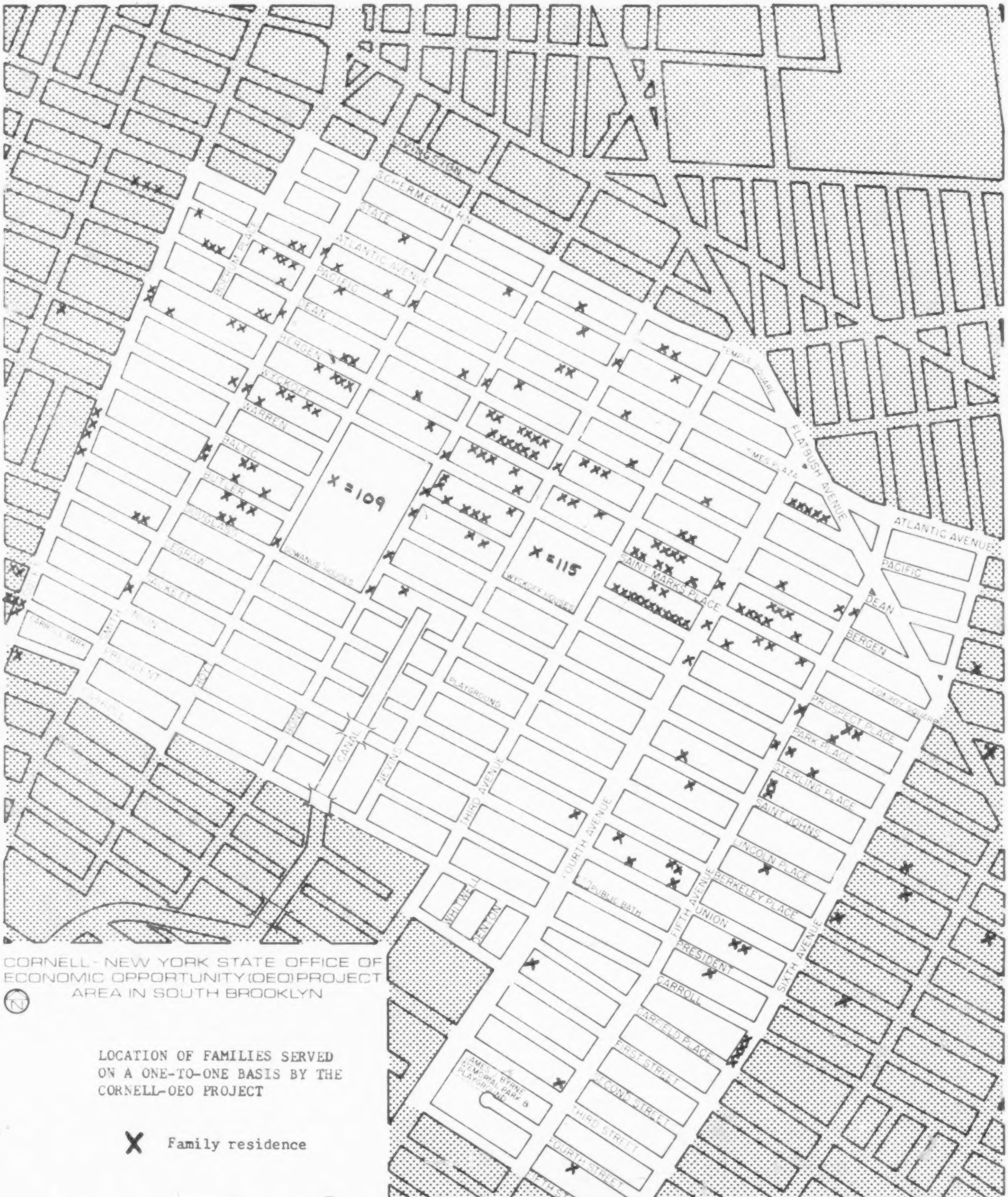
CORNELL-NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY (OEO) PROJECT AREA IN SOUTH BROOKLYN

REHABILITATED HOUSES IN THE PROJECT AREA

* Rehabilitated house

2

SOURCE: N.Y.C. DEPT OF CITY PLANNING, FEBRUARY 1, 1963.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BERKELEY PLACE
GARFIELD PLACE
FIRST STREET
SECOND STREET
THIRD STREET
FOURTH STREET
FIFTH STREET
GOWANUS HOUSES
WYCKOFF HOUSES
PLAYGROUND
PUBLIC BATH
WHITWELL
DENTON
JAMES J. BYRNE MEMORIAL PARK & PLAYGROUND
X = 109
X = 115

CORNELL - NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY (OEO) PROJECT
AREA IN SOUTH BROOKLYN

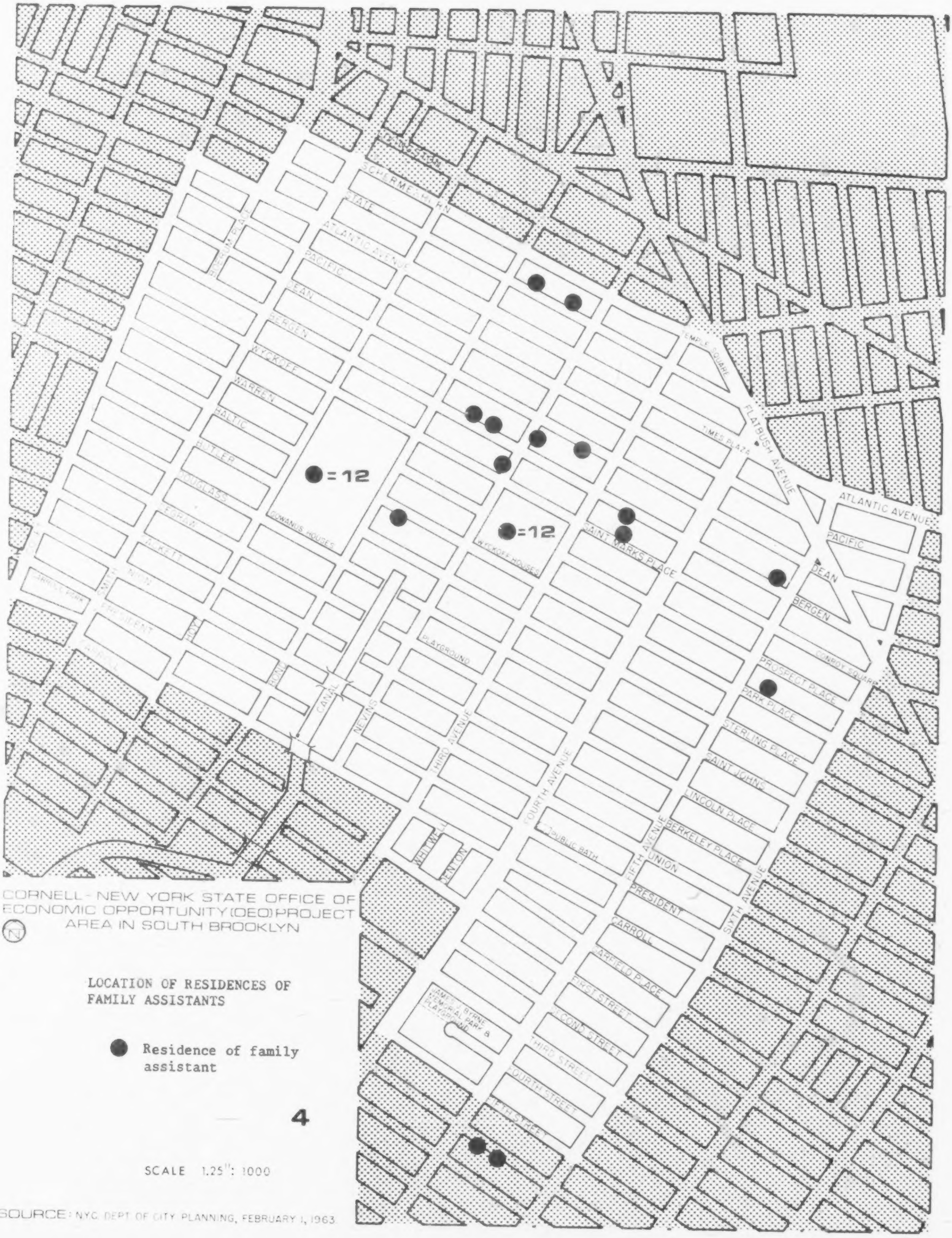
LOCATION OF FAMILIES SERVED
ON A ONE-TO-ONE BASIS BY THE
CORNELL-OEO PROJECT

X Family residence

3

SCALE 1.25" : 1000'

SOURCE: NYC DEPT OF CITY PLANNING, FEBRUARY 1, 1963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SECOND STREET
THIRD STREET
FOURTH STREET
FIFTH STREET
GOWANUS HOUSES
WYCKOFF HOUSES
SAINT MARKS PLACE
PLAYGROUND
PUBLIC BATH
WHITWELL
DENTON
JAMES J. BYRNE MEMORIAL PARK & PLAYGROUND
● = 12
● = 12
N

CORNELL - NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY (OEO) PROJECT AREA IN SOUTH BROOKLYN

LOCATION OF RESIDENCES OF FAMILY ASSISTANTS

● Residence of family assistant

4

SCALE 1.25": 1000

SOURCE: NYC DEPT OF CITY PLANNING, FEBRUARY 1, 1963

APPENDIX C

WHY METHODS FAIL

Mrs. Jean Sutherland
Family Assistant in the Cornell-OEO
Project in South Brooklyn[1]

We can't sit here and say we know what the reasons are, but we can say the seven things that I have here.

1) We feel the reason the methods fail is because the people or community that you are trying to reach are never invited to sit at the conference table to talk with you. Whenever they try it goes through one ear and out the other.

2) Programs that are brought into the community are always demonstration projects that will last one or two years. We feel that programs are brought in to fail. When a program like Head Start was brought in the community they didn't think it would last. Now they see it working, our president wants to cut back on it. Anything that helps the poor to help themselves they take back, as if we were children.

3) We feel that the methods in schools have to change to meet the needs of our children. One way to do this is, if the children are from the North or South, or any place, they should get reading, writing, math or what ever. They should be able to pick right up just where they left off.

4) We feel that white racists played a big part in poor peoples' problems like in employment, education, housing or what ever.

5) You have to be human to have feeling instead of using big words that no one understands. Using plain English would be better and everyone could relate to that, then you would be communicating with the people.

6) Treat poor people as you would anyone else; they have feelings just like you.

7) Our faith lies in the young of all races.

By the way, what is going to happen to these reports? How will they help the poor?

And speaking of it there are not only black poor but white too. I would like to know why is it poor white don't have any thing holding them back, so why are they poor?

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[1] Mrs. Sutherland was a panel member at a session on Methods of Communication at a workshop on Communication for Change with the Rural Disadvantaged, sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council in Washington, D.C., November 4-6, 1970. Mrs. Sutherland was accompanied by another family assistant, Mrs. Annie Talley.

AVAILABLE CORNELL-OEO REPORTS

The written description and documentation of the Cornell-OEO Project includes a main report and five detailed supplementary reports.

Ostrander, E., Harding, M., & Cheney, M. Cornell-OEO Project: An exploration in urban extension activity. New York State College of Human Ecology, Ithaca, New York, 1971, pp. 184. $3.00

Lichtenstein, L., & Harding, M. Supplementary Report No. 1, The project area. New York State College of Human Ecology, Ithaca, New York, 1971, pp. 31. $.50

Harding, M., Ostrander, E., & Cheney, M. Supplementary Report No. 2, Families served by the Cornell-OEO Project. New York State College of Human Ecology, Ithaca, New York, 1971, pp. 152. $2.00

Cornell-OEO Family Assistants and Project Staff, Supplementary Report No. 3, The Cornell-OEO Project through the eyes of the participants. New York State College of Human Ecology, Ithaca, New York, 1971, pp. 50. $.75

Konan, M. Supplementary Report No. 4, Paraprofessionals: Planned and unplanned change in a low-income community. New York State College of Human Ecology, Ithaca, New York, 1971, pp. 25. $1.25

Harding, M., Cheney, M., & Ostrander, E. Supplementary Report No. 5, Forms for data collection. New York State College of Human Ecology, Ithaca, New York, 1971, pp. 68. $1.50

Copies of individual reports may be obtained by writing to Associate Dean for Public Service and Continuing Education, College of Human Ecology, Van Rensselaer Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 14850. Remittance must be made in advance. Please make checks payable to Cornell University.